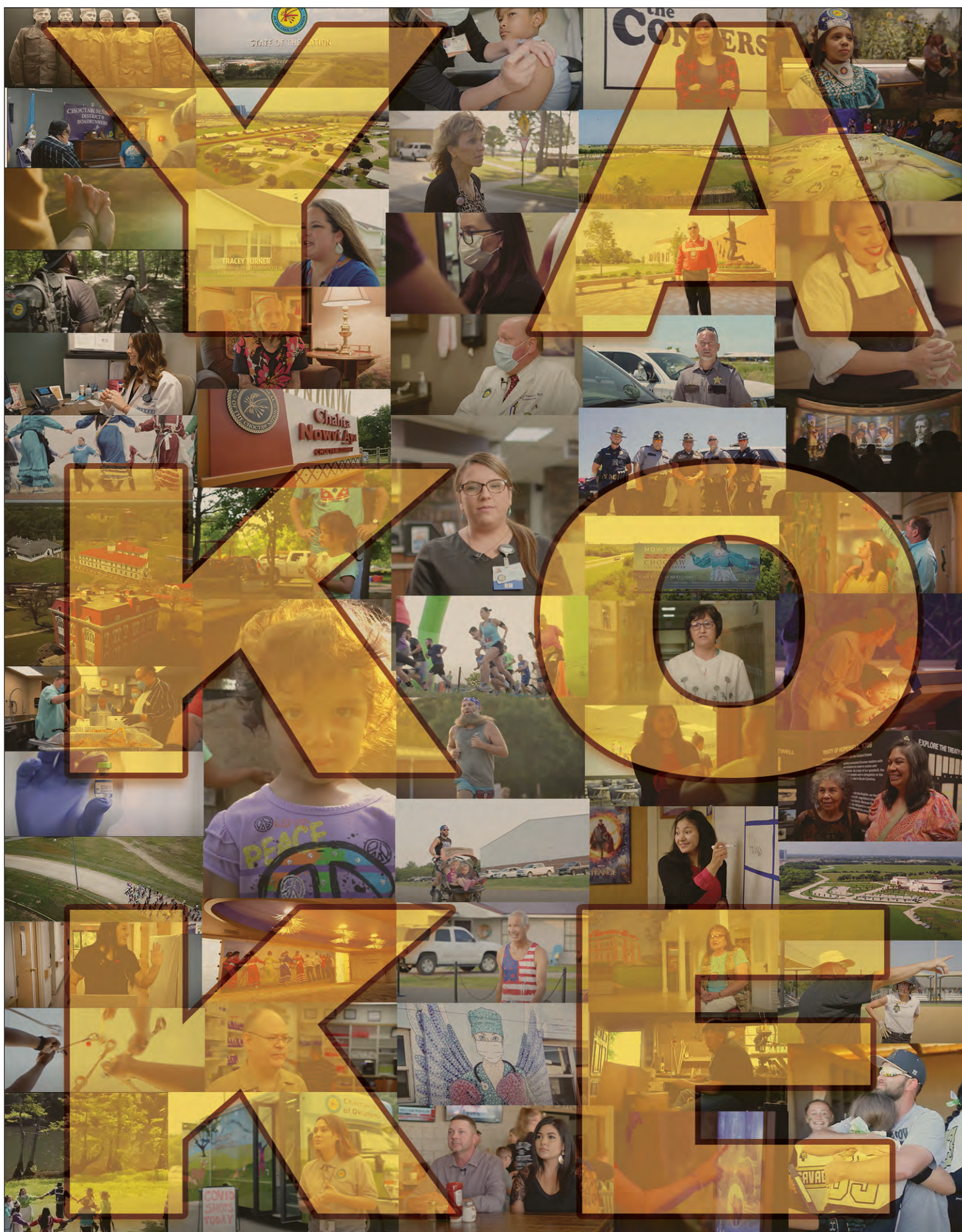




October 2021 Issue



Chief Gary Batton delivered his annual State of the Nation Address via a special video released on Labor Day.

The video highlighted the Choctaw Nation's success, showcasing several programs, the new Choctaw Cultural Center and inspiring Choctaw tribal members.

Below are Chief Batton's message and a few highlights featured in the video.

To watch the virtual State of the Nation Address, please visit choctaw-nation.com/state-of-the-nation.

Last year, I reminded you all that we are a people of miracles. And we have continued to prove it by taking care of each other through some of the toughest obstacles we've faced in a century.

Choctaw people make a positive impact on their communities every day through their hard work and determination. We still have challenges to face, but because of our Chahta Spirit, our communities remain strong and continue to grow through difficulties.

Higher Education

One of the ways our people make a difference is through education. The Choctaw people have always valued education. In fact, Choctaws built the first schools in Indian Territory.

Today, our Higher Education and Career Development programs support tribal members' efforts to learn new skills and be successful in a dynamic job market.

This year, we increased the amount of funding for Higher Ed programs. We also changed some of the

Tribal Members Served
5,457

Total Funding
\$9,114,100

Chief Gary Batton delivers 2021 State of the Nation Address

eligibility requirements to make it even easier for tribal members to get help through scholarships, technology allowances and clothing allowances.

Housing

We know people are happier, healthier and more successful when their most basic needs are met. That's why the Choctaw Nation works so hard to lift our tribal members out of unsafe, substandard housing.

Over the past year, we've performed over a thousand home repairs and installed hundreds of storm shelters.

We've also built new housing units across the Nation through LEAP homes, affordable rentals and Independent Elder housing.

Total Households Served
4,665

Jobs

While we support tribal members who will eventually join the workforce through training and education, we are also supporting the current workforce right here in Southeastern Oklahoma. Over the past year, the job market has been unstable, to say the least. Some people have found they need training to do their jobs differently, while others lost jobs they've held for decades.

This year, we have hired hundreds of associates across the Choctaw reservation in programs and services, as well as commerce and gaming. We also have hundreds of positions open available to anyone looking to elevate their career.

Foster Care

Our children are precious, and they deserve to grow up in safe homes. Right now, our Foster Care program is searching for

Choctaw families who can help shelter and care for children until they can be reunited with their family. The Choctaw Nation provides our foster families with a strong support system to ensure our children's needs are met, and they stay connected with our culture. I pray you will consider helping our children.

Health

The well-being of our people is a top priority of the Choctaw Nation, and over the past year, we've increased our efforts to raise the quality of life, health and wellness in our communities.

Our clinics continue to provide excellent care throughout our reservation and even in bordering states. We also offer medical care, prescriptions, and wellness programs to our associates and their families through our Employee Health Clinics.

One of the programs I'm most proud of is our COVID-19 vaccination roll-out. We partnered with municipal health authorities throughout the reservation to get our frontline workers and elders vaccinated first. This allowed us to protect those who care for our people and those who carry our culture. From there, we were able to vaccinate thousands of people in Southeastern Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas. Research has shown that Native Americans are at a higher risk of developing diabetes. Our Diabetes Prevention and PACE programs are fighting that battle every day through education programs, awareness events and cutting-edge technology. The good news is that we're making progress, but there's still work to be done. We also understand that people are struggling more than ever with mental and emotional health issues. The pandemic and other challenges this year have

put extra stress on us all, and I want everyone to know that the Choctaw Nation is here to help you with a holistic approach to health.

Patient Encounters
800,000

Wellness Center Visits
264,280

Prescriptions Filled
1,182,566

Covid Vaccines Administered
37,632

The Choctaw people have always taken good care of themselves, their neighbors and the land. I'm so proud of the progress we've made this year in funding programs that will improve life for tribal members on and off the reservation. We've also supported our local communities through infrastructure projects, education programs and law enforcement partnerships.

I've always believed in supporting opportunities to make lives better, and that means making it easier to access programs that raise the quality of life for our people.

Small businesses are the heart of our communities, and the Choctaw Nation is proud to support tribal members who dream of owning their own businesses. These folks work hard and put in long hours to bring their dreams to life. They inspire me every day with their "Tvshka Spirit" There's a saying that a rising tide lifts all ships, and when our small businesses are succeeding, it's good for everyone in the community.

Sovereignty

We've scored some big wins for Choctaw sovereignty through the Supreme Court's McGirt decision

and the Sizemore case that followed, but our work is far from finished.

We are facing some tough opposition to the Supreme Court's decision. The governor and attorney general have been very vocal about their efforts to have the decision reversed, but we must remain vigilant to ensure our ability to care for our people and govern ourselves is protected.

Our Sovereignty for Strong Communities Commission worked hard over the past year to identify all the areas of Choctaw operations that are affected by the McGirt decision and work with community partners on jurisdictional issues.

We also worked to implement training for our law enforcement partners in communities throughout the reservation, which helps our community agencies understand jurisdictional issues.

I am proud to work with our local, state and federal law agencies to ensure the safety of everyone who lives in our jurisdiction.

Cross-Deputization Agreements
72

When our ancestors began interacting with European and American settlers, we learned to speak their languages in order to be successful in trade and government relations.

Over time, fewer and fewer people spoke Choctaw fluently. Our children were even forbidden from speaking their native language in schools and in some Choctaw homes.

Today, we are strengthening our language through the Anumpa Aiiikhvna school. Our language experts and fluent speakers teach the Choctaw language

to students in communities and public schools across our reservation.

Tribal sovereignty isn't just about law enforcement, regulation and court cases.

It's about our culture.

Some of our most important work is taking place in our brand-new Cultural Center, where our past is preserved and our future is protected through art, food and history.

I can't wait for everyone to experience the Chahta Spirit and learn about our people.

Yakoke

As a tenacious Tribe, we have endured and will continue to do so. And it's all because of you – every tribal member who learns and speaks our language. Every member of the Choctaw proud waving our flag. Over the past year-and-a-half, your continuous efforts have played huge a part in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's continued rise.

Every nurse. Every doctor. Every individual who stood along the frontlines and helped protect us – yakoke.

Every Travel Plaza cashier. Every distribution worker. Every Associate – who continued to rise against adversity each and every day – yakoke.

Every parent. Every student. Every family who showed bravery in the face of hardship - yakoke.

It is because of your tenacity, your determination, your spirit, that we have come so far in rising above our challenges – each and every time.

For centuries, we have relied on the lessons and stories of our ancestors' courage to give us hope. I am confident that, a hundred years from now, our Tribe will rely on the lessons and stories of YOUR courage to rise today.

On behalf of them – and all of our Tribe – it is my privilege and honor to say, yakoke and chi pisa li chike.

Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

American Rescue Plan Act

Halito,
I am excited to bring you this update regarding the America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).
As of September 10th, we have received 115,194 applications for the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) programs, and 93% have been approved.
Under the ARPA programs, elders 55 and older receive \$200 a month for groceries, and \$1,000 per year for the next two years. Tribal members 18 and older receive \$1,000 per year for two years; while those tribal members 17 and under receive \$700 per year for two years.

This means that our tribal members nationwide who have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic are receiving assistance.
In looking at the data it showed that nationwide earnings had declined for our elder population (55 and older) and that they were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. We also wanted to help

all our other age groups so we looked at how we could assist the 18-54 and under 18 populations.

We hope these dollars assist you during these difficult and trying times. We encourage tribal members to stay updated on ARPA programs via <https://www.choctawnation.com/covidrelief>.
Yakohe and God bless!



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

The Christian Life

The Book of Numbers pictures the Christian in this world, which to him is a wilderness. In time he discovers it to be a place of separation, a place of discipline, and a place of mobilization.

The moment he is born again, he is separated from his old life in Egypt. He then enters God's school of child training or discipline.

Moses' message to God's people was that God's purpose for them in the wilderness was for discipline.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments, or no."—Deuteronomy 8:2.

God's people need to be mobilized for the spiritual warfare that they will encounter. For mobilization purposes, there must be certain qualifications for the Lord's army. Only Israelites by birth were eligible to serve in the army of the Lord.

So it is with God's people today. Only those that are "Born of the Spirit" can successfully engage in the spiritual battle for the Lord. This principle is overlooked in the modern church.

There are many sincere people who truly want to please God and live a good life without being born again into God's family, trying in their own strength to be accepted before Him.

There are some who "think," or "hope," or "feel" that they are in the Lord's army without the new birth. The next qualification is they must be mature in spiritual matters.

"For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe." – Hebrews 5:13.

The third qualification is, he must be placed or assigned. The Lord knows His children, and He knows where each can best serve Him and places them accordingly.

Each ministry that one chooses to serve the Lord in must be assigned by God. The self-chosen field of service to God is usually not richly blessed by God.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Domestic Violence Awareness

It's October, and fall is finally here. The leaves are changing, football season has officially begun, and soon we'll be purchasing Halloween candy for our kids and grandkids.

While October is full of a lot of fun, it also brings to light a serious issue – Domestic Violence Awareness.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV), American Indian and Alaska Native women experience assault and domestic violence at much higher rates than women of any other ethnicity.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Victim Services provides a variety of programs for victims of domestic violence, including Project EMPOWER, Victim Assistance Formula Grant, Project SERV, Project HOUSE, Essential Life Skills, and Tribal Set-a-Side.

Project EMPOWER is a tribal government grant that provides advocacy, short-term rental and utility assistance, limited transportation, home visits, safety planning and healing circles to domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking victims.

The Project SERV program provides transitional housing, legal assistance, and other services for six to 24 months. It's an Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) rural sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and stalking program the Nation has adopted.

Project HOUSE facilitates a Coordinated Community Response (CCR), whose goal is to effectively support underserved Native American victims fleeing sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and/or stalking. Eligible program participants are provided with transitional housing assistance, which includes rent and utility financial support. The program also assists with costs related to relocation and transitional housing for six to 24 months.

The Victim Assistance Formula Grant program provides comprehensive, culturally competent, direct services to victims of crime and their families. Services include: case management, needs assessment, development of individualized service plans, counseling, assessment of eligibility for other programs, safety planning, referrals and ongoing follow-up to ensure the victims' needs are met.

Another program the Choctaw Nation provides is Essential Life Skills, which provides parenting and budgeting skills, interviewing techniques, resume and leadership skills to crime victims of all ages. The Essential Life Skills program also provides monthly life group sessions.

The final program on the list is VOCA Set-Aside, a supplement to existing victim services and other support programs. It provides educational services and utility assistance to crime victims who want to attend a short-term educational institution.

Our employees work very hard to assist our people daily to overcome difficult situations. If you know of any employees that work in any of the areas listed, let them know how much you appreciate their servant's heart to serve our people.

Most importantly, if you or someone you know is in a domestic violence situation and is in need of assistance, please call (800) 522-6179 or visit choctawnation.com/domestic-violence.
God bless.

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Applications received by deadline will receive both meal vouchers.

Please complete the Chahta Achvffa online application and attach a copy of income verification for all household members and a utility bill (only accepting water, natural gas and electric bill – propane will not be accepted.)
Must live within the Choctaw Nation service area.
Vouchers will be mailed: Thanksgiving – Friday, November 5 | Christmas – Friday, December 3


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Choctaw Nation Outreach Services



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Choctaw Nation crowns 2021-2022 royalty

By Kendra Germany-Wall & Kelsey Brown

Though the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival was canceled, the Annual Choctaw Royalty Pageant was held Friday, Sept. 3, at Tvshka Homma, crowning the new 2021 princesses.

The Choctaw Nation Princess and Royalty Program has been molding and shaping strong Chahta ohoyo for decades.

Annually, the Choctaw Nation crowns local princesses in each of its 12 districts. Qualifying contestants are judged on talent, poise and traditional wear. During district pageants, one representative is chosen in each division. The district princesses advance to compete in the Choctaw Nation Royalty Pageant held during the annual Labor Day Festival at Tvshka Homma. Three young women are crowned Little Miss, Junior Miss, and Miss Choctaw Nation and serve as ambassadors for the following year.

This year, 25 princesses representing the Choctaw Nation districts competed in the Choctaw Nation Royalty Pageant, where participants were judged on talent, poise and traditional Choctaw dress.

Newly crowned royalty for the Choctaw Nation are Miss Choctaw Nation Madison Jade Cossey from District 4, Junior Miss Adelyn Brown from District 10, and Little Miss Milena Amos from District 2.

Madison Jade Cossey is the 20-year-old daughter of Kelly McGee of Spiro. She is a junior at the University of Arkansas-Fort Smith, where she is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology and minoring in Music. She is the president of the Native American Student Organization at UAFS

and is a member of Kappa Kappa Psi fraternity, a member of the Psychology Club, a member of the UAFS athletic band and the UAFS wind ensemble which performs at various events throughout Arkansas. Madison is employed at Cato where she enjoys using her artistic catering skills to create displays. Madison also volunteers her time helping with the elder dinners and handing out the kids' meals during the summer at the Choctaw Community Center in Spiro.

Adelyn Brown of Caddo is the 14-year-old daughter of Sherri Lynn Brown and Kristin Lee Brown. She completed the eighth grade this spring at Caney Public School.

Adelyn is Southeast District I FCCLA Vice President, a local FCCLA officer, has participated in STAR events at district and state level, a Principal's Honor Roll member all during middle school and elementary, and awarded Spotlight on Projects second place at state. She volunteered during the pandemic handing out and delivering meals to students.

One of Adelyn's favorite things to do is to be outside. She loves being in nature and playing with her dogs, Bandit, Boots, and Cowboy or her cat, Toothless. She also enjoys playing basketball during her free time. She loves spending time with her cousins from Texas and Kansas at her Nana and Papa's house.

Milena Amos of Broken Bow is the 9-year-old daughter of Jeremiah and Dayla Tom and Joshua and Brittaney Riley. She is in the fourth grade at Lukfata Elementary School, where she has been on the Superintendent's Honor Roll for three years. Milena has earned awards for Accelerated Reading



Photo by Deidre Elrod

From left to right: Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr., District 4 Councilman Jess Henry, Miss Choctaw Nation Madison Cossey from District 4, District 2 Councilman Tony Ward, Little Miss Milena Amos from District 2, Junior Miss Adelyn Brown from District 10, District 10 Councilman Anthony Dillard and Chief Gary Batton.

points, reading, math, and spelling achievement. She is a Choctaw STAR student with all A's and perfect attendance, a Native American Indian Club member, and was named to the 2021 Broken Bow 10U All-Star Softball team.

Milena has been a member of Broken Bow School of Dance for five years and studies ballet, tap, jazz, clogging, acrobatics, and baton twirling. She enjoys learning how to play the piano, singing, and playing softball and basketball. Each Spring, Milena plants a garden with her great-grandmother, and they share their vegetables with elders in the community. Milena attends White Sands United Method-

ist Church in Valliant. She enjoys reading, baking, and spending time with her family and friends.

During their one-year reign, princesses will attend Choctaw classes, serve as goodwill ambassadors and represent the Choctaw people at events and functions.

"The Choctaw Royalty pageant is about more than just winning a crown," said Chief Gary Batton. "Each of these young women are preserving Choctaw tradition. I am very proud to call them ambassadors of the Choctaw Nation."

For more information on Choctaw Nation Royalty, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/princess-pageants>.

Fall fun in Choctaw Country

By Christian Toews

Southeastern Oklahoma is a great place to visit all year long, but Oklahoma's fall has a unique appeal. With mild temperatures, changing leaves and outdoor adventures, there are more reasons to visit Choctaw Country during this season than you can count. Let's look at some activities and places to see this fall.

One of the most exciting places to visit is Robbers Cave State Park near Wilburton, Oklahoma.

This state park has a lot to offer, from hiking, camping, fishing and rock climbing to storied history. The state park gets its name from the outlaws who used the cave and surrounding area as hideouts.

One of the best ways to experience what it was like during that time is a horseback ride through the park. Fall is the perfect time to take a ride with Robbers Cave Stables. This

guided horseback riding business is located inside the state park and offers an experience for everyone.

You can find the perfect experience to enjoy this park on horseback, from day rides to overnight camping trips.

Codyjames Cook is the stable's manager and son of the founder, who started the business ten years ago.

According to Cook, they offer an experience for everyone, and it's a great way to get away from the busyness of life.

"You can really disconnect from everything out here. There are a lot of hiking trails and a lot of places that you can get to where the view is incredible," he said.

Robbers Cave Stables offer many lengths of day rides.

According to Cook, from a short 15-minute ride to hours exploring the landscape, there is a ride for every age group or time limit.

If you want an even more immersive experience of cowboy life, you can book an overnight camping trip.

"We provide camping trips for outdoor lovers who want to sleep under the stars like a real cowboy," their website explains. "This is a lovely escape from the big city for your family, which helps lower stress and become more social with each other. Whether you want to challenge yourself with a new experience or enhance your typical camping trip, our ranch is the place to do it."

According to their website, you can "Ride through the historic trails that the outlaws of the past once rode. Here, you'll sleep in an old, covered wagon while eating a cowboy steak dinner. Sometimes it's the simple things in life that bring us the most joy, and that's what we are all about here at Robbers Cave Stables."

For more information and for booking a ride, visit <https://robberscavestables.com>.

Southeast of Robber Cave State Park, you'll find another breathtaking Oklahoma State Park.

Beavers Bend State Park offers a unique beauty only found in the eastern part of Oklahoma.



Submitted photo

Platter Flats Pumpkin Patch offers a variety of activities for every age to enjoy this fall.

There are many things to do, like fly fishing, hiking, swimming, canoeing or kayaking, ATV riding and so much more.

For many, a horseback ride is a perfect way to spend a fall afternoon.

You can see many types of wildlife and experience one of the most beautiful parts of Oklahoma.

Beavers Bend Depot & Trail Rides is conveniently located inside Beavers Bend State Park and offers many rides a day.

According to their Facebook page, "Guided trail rides are offered starting at the top of each hour. The ride will take you through 2 1/2 miles of scenic Beavers Bend State Park Game Reserve. Expect to see some of the native wildlife such as white tail deer, squirrel, fox, etc. The ride lasts approximately 45 minutes, but please allow at least an hour to complete the ride."

If you want more information on these rides, check out their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/trainandstables/>.

If horseback riding isn't your thing, there are many other options for fall activities in Choctaw Country.

Maybe you are looking to celebrate fall by carving a pumpkin, going on a hayride or taking some fall family photos.

If so, Platter Flats Pumpkin Patch is the place for you.

Located just a few miles southwest of Durant, Oklahoma, this pumpkin patch offers more than just pumpkins.

Brandi Burkhalter and her husband, Guy, opened the pumpkin patch last year.

"There are a lot of activities for the kids. We have a bounce pillow, hayride, hay slide, hay tower, a corn bin, duck races, a petting zoo, a barrel train ride, a corn maze and more. We have a food trailer this year where we will be serving food. We have several areas for adults to relax and enjoy the fall weather. It's really a fun place for the whole family," Brandi explained.

According to Brandi, they have many people who come and take fall family photos on their property as well.

"We set up several photo areas with decorations, or some photographers will go out into our sunflower field and use that," she said.

Perhaps you are staying at the newly opened Choctaw Casino and Resort's Sky Tower and want to add a fun family activity to your weekend. Maybe you want to spend an evening with your family enjoying the fall weather. Platter Flats Pumpkin Patch is the perfect place to celebrate the fall season. You can find more information and see upcoming activities by visiting Platter Flats Pumpkin Patch on Facebook.

There are so many ways to enjoy the fall season in Choctaw Country. No matter what your interest is, Southeastern Oklahoma will not disappoint you.

To see even more options for fall activities, visit www.choctawcountry.com.



Photo by Christian Toews

Katie Monroe enjoys an afternoon on horseback in Beavers Bend State Park.

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Amy Gray, RN, an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant is part of the team to address any breastfeeding needs.

Choctaw Nation Health Services

SCHEDULE A RIDE WITH TRIBAL TRANSIT

Did you know?

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

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

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

Choctaw Nation Tribal Transit

Choctaw Nation awards more than \$300,000 to local communities

BRYAN COUNTY, Okla., (September 16, 2021) – In September, The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) and the Choctaw Development Fund (CDF) awarded the town of Kenefic \$202,850 and the town of Calera \$145,000. Both towns will be using the funds received to match Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The town of Kenefic will restore aging pipes to ensure clean and safe drinking water and the Town of Calera will upgrade the wastewater treatment facility to perform more efficiently.

“A top focus for Choctaw Nation is to improve our region’s infrastructure issues and help build more resilient communities,”

states Chief Gary Batton. “We are honored to provide the necessary funds that are vital to the health of roughly 2,400 tribal and non-tribal residents that reside in both Kenefic and Calera.”

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides annual grants to states, cities, and counties to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. The CDF supports economic viability and sustainability by partnering with Choctaw small business owners, cities and municipalities

to create long-term growth and job creation within the territories of CNO.

The town of Kenefic experiences low pressures of water and the funds received from CNO will be used for the installation of a smart valve standpipe and the replacement of aging piping between the standpipe and standpipe valve vault along with rehab on two water wells.

By installing a smart valve on the standpipe water line, the valve will maintain a height in the standpipe that keeps the system pressure at a higher level. The water lines between the standpipe and the standpipe valve vault that take water into and out of the standpipe have experienced leaks and have become difficult to repair.

“We thank Choctaw Nation for recognizing this need and for investing in

our shared goals for the Town of Calera,” states Brenton Rucker, Mayor of Calera. “Without the generosity from Choctaw Nation, we wouldn’t have been able to make the necessary improvements to our wastewater treatment plant and continue to provide for our citizens.”

The funds received to the town of Calera will be used to upgrade the wastewater treatment plant that will help the small rural town that is experiencing rapid growth that the current system cannot keep up with.

Upgrades include the purchase and installation of aeration equipment to improve treatment capability, modifications to the control systems to incorporate the new equipment and additional sludge dewatering equipment to improve increased flexibility in sludge wasting.



From left to right: Don Hyde, Calera Chief of Police; Brandi Burkhalter, Vice Mayor of Calera; Chief Gary Batton; James Dry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 9; Brenton Rucker, Mayor of Calera and Jake Trujillo, Calera Emergency Management Director.



From left to right: James Dry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 9; Anthony Dillard, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 10; April Cook, Kenefic City Councilmember; Allen Hicks, Mayor of Kenefic and Sherry Puckett.

District 4

I have been in office a couple of weeks now, and I am having a great time. I appreciate the privilege of holding this office. Feel free to contact me anytime.

– Jess Henry, District 4



Above: Councilman Henry poses with Jade Cossey of District 4, the newly crowned Miss Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Left, and Bottom Left and Bottom Right: Councilman Henry presented checks to the cities of Poteau and Pocola and LeFlore County on behalf of the Choctaw Nation Community Development Fund. These funds are used to better communities throughout the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation.



Choctaw Nation swears in six Tribal Council Members



Photos by Mekayla Monroe

On Sept. 3, 2021, six Choctaw Tribal Council Members were sworn into their new term. From left to right: James Fraizer of District 12, Joey Tom of District 7, Jennifer Woods of District 6, Judge David Burrage, District 9 Councilman James Dry, District 5 Councilman Ron Perry, District 4 Councilman Jess Henry, District 1 Councilman Thomas Williston, District 10 Councilman Anthony Dillard and District 2 Councilman Tony Ward.



From left to right: Chief Gary Batton, District 11 Councilman Robert Karr, District 12 Councilman James Fraizer, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr., District 6 Councilwoman Jennifer Woods, District 7 Councilman Joey Tom, Judge David Burrage, District 9 Councilman James Dry, District 5 Councilman Ron Perry, District 4 Councilman Jess Henry, District 1 Councilman Thomas Williston, District 10 Councilman Anthony Dillard and District 2 Councilman Tony Ward.

Choctaw Nation Community Center Holiday Dinners

District 1 Thanksgiving Dinners Idabel Nov. 17 @ 11:45 a.m.	District 4 TBA	Christmas Dinner TBA
Christmas Dinners TBA	District 5 Thanksgiving Dinner Stigler Nov. 17 @ 11:30 a.m.	District 9 Thanksgiving Dinners Durant Nov. 17 @ 11 a.m.
District 2 Thanksgiving Dinners Battiest/Bethel Nov. 8 @ 4:30 p.m.	Christmas Dinner Stigler Dec. 14 @ 11:30 a.m.	Christmas Dinner TBA
Broken Bow <i>Senior meal</i> Nov. 10 @ 11 a.m. <i>Community meal</i> Nov. 15 @ 11 a.m.	District 6 Thanksgiving Dinner Wilburton Nov. 17 @ 11 a.m.	District 10 Thanksgiving Dinner Atoka Nov. 10 @ 11 a.m.
Smithville Nov. 17 @ 11:30 a.m.	Christmas Dinner TBA	Christmas Dinner Atoka Dec 8 @ 11 a.m.
Christmas Dinners Broken Bow Dec. 8 @ 11 a.m. Smithville Dec. 22 @11:30 a.m.	District 7 Thanksgiving Dinners Wright City Nov. 10 @ 12 p.m. Antlers Nov. 17 @ 12 p.m. Tushkahomma Nov. 19 @ 6 p.m.	District 11 Thanksgiving Dinners Crowder Nov. 10 @ 11 a.m. McAlester Nov. 17 @ 11 a.m.
District 3 Thanksgiving Dinners Poteau Nov. 17 @ 5 p.m. Spiro Nov. 10 @11:30 a.m. Talihina Nov. 18 @ 12 p.m.	Christmas Dinners Wright City Dec. 8 @ 12 p.m. Antlers Dec. 14 @12 p.m.	Christmas Dinners TBA
Christmas Dinners TBA	District 8 Thanksgiving Dinner Hugo Nov. 17 @ 11 a.m.	District 12 Thanksgiving Dinner Coalgate Nov. 17 @ 11 a.m.

These events are subject to change. Please contact your local community center for more information.

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We are looking for people who are Choctaw Proud to participate in upcoming commercials, radio spots and video projects.
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EVENTS

Henry Roberts family (Bennington, Okla.) Gathering
 Oct. 23, 2021 at 10 a.m. Please come and join us for our gathering at the Centrahoma Community Center in Centrahoma, Oklahoma. Everyone, please bring a covered dish and join the family with a good meal, games and lots of sharing.
 We encourage as many family members as we can. Masks and sanitizers will be provided. Contact Mary Polk Siegar at 580-276-7418 or masieger44@yahoo.com

CELEBRATE HERITAGE DAY!
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Choctaw Nation Cultural Services

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

October 5	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
October 6	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
October 8	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
October 8	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
October 12	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
October 13	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
October 15	Crowder	By Appointment
October 19	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
October 20	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
October 20	Stigler	By Appointment
October 22	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
October 22	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
October 27	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.

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

NEED TO CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS?

Contact the Choctaw Nation
 Circulation Department
580.924.8280 x4028
 Read the Biskinik online at
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BISKINIK

Biskinik
Announcement Guidelines

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

Gary Batton Chief
Jack Austin Jr. Assistant Chief

The Official
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 of the
 Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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

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

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

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

NOTES

My name is Oscar Arellano, born in Los Angeles. I just became a tribally enrolled member and I'm looking for my relatives. I am a son of Teresa Wallace, who is the daughter of Geneva Wallace and Vernon Wallace. I have stage 4 cancer and want to visit my land before I die. Please call me if we can connect: 1 (562) 504-1218.

Oscar Arellano

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in applying for a loan a representative will be available at the:
 McAlester Community Center
 October 8, 2021
 9:00 – 11:00

- CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION AGENDA**
 September 11, 2021
- CALL TO ORDER
 - OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
 - Moment of silence in remembrance of 9/11
 - ROLL CALL
 - APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - Regular Session August 14, 2021
 - Special Session August 26, 2021
 - WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
 - Veteran of the Month, District #12 – Reuben Burge.
 Citation read by James Frazier. Mr. Burge is a resident of Coalgate and served in the US Army.
 - PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - Kaleb Standridge, Individual—Funds for Educational Trip.
 Not present. No comments were made
 - ELECTION OF SPEAKER, SECRETARY, CHAPLAIN, AND SPEAKER PRO-TEMPORE OF TRIBAL COUNCIL
 - Thomas Williston for Speaker, Unanimous Approval;
 - Secretary-Ron Perry, Unanimous Approval;
 - Jennifer Woods for Chaplain, Unanimous Approval;
 - Tony Ward for Speaker Pro-Tempore, Unanimous Approval
 - APPOINTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARIAN, SERGEANT-AT-ARMS, AND RECORDING SECRETARY
 - All positions remain;
 - Patty Hawkins recognized for 21 years of service
 - APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES
 - REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
 - NEW BUSINESS
 - Approve the 2022 Budgets for the Indian Child Welfare Program and the Family Preservation Program. **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-92-21
 - Rescind Council Bills CB-11-08 and CB-84-15 and Approve Appropriations of Matching Funds for Cash, Stock, Bond or other Monetary Donations. **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-93-21
 - Approve the Funds and Budget for Year 1 of 3 for Community Opioid Intervention Pilot Project (COIPP). **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-94-21
 - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets (Vehicles). **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-95-21
 - Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets (Miscellaneous Equipment). **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-96-21
 - Approve Grazing Lease No. G09-2000 of Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations of Oklahoma in Atoka County, Oklahoma. **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-97-21
 - Amend the Choctaw Nation Children's Code. **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-98-21
 - Enact the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Mental Health and Substance Abuse Code. **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-99-21
 - Rescind CB-87-21 and Enact the Claims and Immunities Act of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. **Vote Counts:** YEAs – Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed - CB-100-21
 - OTHER NEW BUSINESS
 - OLD BUSINESS
 - ADJOURNMENT
 - CLOSING PRAYER
- All council members were present.

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Choctaw Nation Children & Family Services



Where to Hike in Choctaw Country

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Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna
 October Language Lesson

Onnahinli Nan Akanimi
 Morning Reminders

1. Tani.	Get up.
2. Chi okcha?	Are you awake?
3. Chi nashuka achefa.	Wash your face.
Chi nashuka ish achefa ha?	Did you wash your face?
4. Chi noti achefa	Wash/brush your teeth.
Chi noti ish achefa ha?	Did you brush your teeth?
5. Chipashi shilli.	Comb your hair.
Chipashi ish shilli ha?	Did you comb your hair?
6. Chim ilefoka fokka.	Put on your clothes.
7. Chim iyyvbuski holo.	Put on your socks.
Iyyvbuski ish holo ho?	Are you wearing socks?
8. Chi shulush holo.	Put on your shoes.
Chi shulush ish holo ha?	Did you put on your shoes?
9. Chi bahta ishi.	Get your backpack.
10. Chi hullo li. Chi pisa la chike!	I love you. See you later!

Sentence #1 - 'tani' is used when speaking to someone who is in a lying position.
 Sentence #7 - The word 'iyyvbuski' is the word for 'sock/s', however, it is most commonly pronounced and shortened to 'yabuski'. The first part of the word 'iyyi' refers to the feet. The corresponding question would be "Chi yabuski holo".
 Sentences #7 & 8 - The word 'holo' is used specifically for putting wearable items on the feet. Ex. shoes, socks, boots, etc.

www.choctawschool.com

Janie Pauline Castleman

Janie Pauline Castleman, 73, passed away July 22, 2021.

Janie was born March 9, 1948, in Unger, Okla., to Robert E. and Bertie Shelton.

She was preceded in death by her husband James; her parents; brother John E. Shelton; and daughter-in-law Dena Castleman.

Janie is survived by her daughters Stephanie Raney and spouse Kenneth, and Karen Harris and spouse Alan; son Tommy Castleman; grandchildren Amanda Criger and spouse Calvin, and Blake Raney and fiancée Taniece Mortimer; great-grandson Hayden Raney; beloved friend Sandra Carter; brothers Jimmy Shelton, Ray Shelton and spouse Rita, Danny Shelton and spouse Gina, and Dooley Shelton; Mary Lee Barfield and spouse Wes, JoAnn Wynne, Helen Young, Charlene Harrison, Dorothy Martin, Donna Sue Wilson, and Sharon Barnett; along with many friends from church and quilting.

For the full obituary, please visit Fry-Gibbs Funeral Home

Melvin Lee Wade

Melvin Lee Wade, 77, passed away April 11, 2021.

Melvin was born April 9, 1944, in Battiest, Okla., to Alice and Eli Williams.

He was preceded in death by his parents; uncle and aunt Carlos and Esien Wade; brothers Eastman Wade and William Wade; and sister Verdie Lou Wade.

Melvin is survived by cousins Patricia Choate and spouse Floyd, Doris Choate, Darlene Estrada, Diantha Noah, Angela Noah, and Arnold Noah and spouse Christy; special friend Lyndell "Roy Dale" Ludlow; a host of loving cousins, family, and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Bunch-Singleton Funeral Home.

Odetha Jean Billy

Odetha Jean "Melva Jean" (Noah) Billy, 86, passed away July 29, 2021.

Melva Jean was born Aug. 9, 1934, in Finley, Okla., to Nancy (Frazier) and Nelson Noah.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Clarence Billy Sr.; sister Betty Ruth Baker; and special niece Diana Austin.

Melva Jean is survived by her children Gay and Ernie Baker, Lynn Smallwood and Tony Frazier, Laura Nichols, and Jonah and Cheryl Billy; grandchildren Katrina Walker (Amiya, Kinsley), Kathia and Ryan Spring, Daniel and Rachel Baker (Evan, Issaic, McKinley, Creedon, Nova), John David Baker, Kristi and Ron Gallant (Taryn, Isaiah, Darrowlyn, Ava, Jaxyn, Joshua), Elisabeth Smallwood (Bellamy), Amy Smallwood and Chris Marzeck (Kahlan), Bobby Nichols II and Letty Nichols (Bobby Nichols III, Briana, Lauren, Brooklyn, Ethan, Owen, Vincent, Isabella), Brandi Nichols and Gary Ward (Taya, Takara), Amber Billy (Noah), and Matthew and Lacey Billy (Karsyn, Jonah, Journey); as well as many other family members and friends.

For the full obituary, please view Serenity Funeral Home.

Loretta Cooper

Loretta Cooper, 72, passed away July 27, 2021.

Loretta was born June 16, 1949, in Talihina, Okla., to Sampson and Mary Parish.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters Cora Parish, Linda Parish, and Diana LaRocque; grandchild Paige Walker; and great-grandchild Zaiden Phillips.

Loretta is survived by her children Tonya Hogue and spouse Brandon, Stacey Cooper and spouse Beverly, and Nancy Robertson and spouse Chase; brothers Tom Parish, Steve Parish, Samuel Parish, and Simon Parish; sisters Helen Wang and Jennifer Barnett; grandchildren Emily Phillips, Jake Cooper, ShiAnn Cooper, Dade Cooper, Tyler Walker, Taylor Walker, Kenny Walker Jr., and Gage Robertson; great-grandchildren Damien Pleets, Jada Pleets, Joselyn Pleets, Jonathan Ward Jr., Areli Byers-Cooper, Addison Leetka, Dominic Leetka, Jaxson Coronado, and Angel Coronado; as well as a host of beloved friends and family members.

For the full obituary, please visit Serenity Funeral Home.

Randy Joe Smith

Randy Joe Smith, 67, passed away June 3, 2021.

Randy was born May 26, 1954, in Poteau, Okla. to Bill and Lorene Owens.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother Tim Smith; mother-in-law Gerry Brody; and grandparents Eli and Sally Mize, and Jack and Rosa Smith.

Randy is survived by his wife Marilyn; children Tanya Cooper and Rodney Smith; sisters Bobbi Jones and spouse Mike, and Renee Ming; brothers Ronnie Smith, Rick Owens and spouse Karon, and Reggie Owens; grandchildren Cody Smith, Colton Goff, Jace Goff, Levi Smith, and Kade Cooper; stepmom Pat Smith; adopted couple Trevor and Sierra Partlow with Maverick Cole Partlow and MaCade Monroe Partlow; other relatives, loved ones and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Evans and Miller Funeral Home.

Clodus Ray Smith

Clodus Ray Smith, 93, passed away Aug. 14, 2021.

Clodus was born May 15, 1928, in Dibble, Okla., to William Thomas Smith and Rachel Hale.

He was preceded in death by his brothers Doyle, John, and Dale; and sister Jean Johansen.

Clodus is survived by his children Diane Chaat Smith and partner Jake Strongbow, Paul Chaat Smith and spouse Lynora Williams, Martha Lynn Chaat Smith and spouse Robert L. Jones; grandson Robert Parker C. Jones; sister Barbara Thomas; brother Willard; and many cousins, nephews, and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Mercer-Adams Funeral Home.

**David Wayne Harris**

David Wayne Harris, 75, passed away July 21, 2021.

David was born Nov. 14, 1945, in Schults, Okla., to Claude Fletcher and Lottie Jewell (Barnes) Harris.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Claude Earl, Franklin, Robert, Hiram, William, Willie B. "Pete", and Larry Harris; sisters Louise Fields and Maxine Goodwin.

David is survived by his wife Gwendolyn; son Timothy Wayne Harris; brother Stanley Wade Harris and spouse Susan; sisters Lucile Banzhaf and spouse Darrell, and Doris Bray and spouse Fred; along with a host of loving family and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Bunch-Singleton Funeral Home.

Regina Sue Mings

Regina Sue (Ganote) Mings, 65, passed away July 12, 2021.

Regina was born March 20, 1956, in Talihina, Okla., to Marie (Leflore) and Kent Ganote.

He was preceded in death by her parents; brother Ted Ganote; grandmother Edna Carter; mother-in-law Frances Mings; and father-in-law Denver Mings.

Regina is survived by her husband Don; children Keith Mings and spouse Michelle, Gregory Mings, Britni Landers, Michael Burch, and Tawni Glander and spouse Robert; grandchildren Trevor Mings, Tanner Mings, Trinity Mings, Ryan Mings, Kyle Mings, Kelsey Mings, Brooklyn Landers, and Hudson Glander; sister Paula Ritter; as well as numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and extended family.

For the full obituary, please visit McCarn Funeral Service.

Richard Adam Gomez

Richard "Rich" Adam Gomez, 47, passed away July 30, 2021.

Rich was born July 7, 1974, in Dallas, TX., to Ruben Fernandez Gomez and Sophia Linda Impson.

He was preceded in death by his mother; sister Candleria "Candy" Anderson; brother Patrick Anderson; and nephew Michael Anderson.

Rich is survived by nephews John Anderson, Brandon Anderson and spouse Rachel, Jeremy Anderson, and Kenneth Anderson and spouse Erin; nieces Stacey Tiddark, Elizabeth Wheeler, and Cindy Woodward; cousins Steve and Diana Woodward, and Katherine Wheeler; great-nieces Lily Tanner and Vanessa Anderson; great-nephews Ethan Anderson and Nathan Anderson; brothers Albert Gomez, Steve Leffall, and David McGee; numerous other cousins, family members, and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Bishop Funeral Service.

Lyda Loretta Owens

Lyda Loretta Owens, 81, passed away Aug. 6, 2021.

Lyda was born April 18, 1940, in Wynnewood, Okla., to Margaret Susan and Roy Hamilton.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Herald, Chester, and John Hamilton; and sisters Mae McSpadden and Clyda Phillips.

Lyda is survived by her children Darren Owens and spouse Mark, and Susan Atkins; granddaughter Bryssa Atkins; siblings Bill Hamilton and friend Marcy Fuller, and Catherine (Arabell) and Don Martin; beloved nieces and nephews C.R. Wilkins and spouse Cathy, Edwin Hamilton, Peggy Nipper and spouse Paul, Johnny Hamilton and spouse Becky, Merrill McSpadden and spouse Nadine, Barbara Brattain and spouse Eddie, Susan Starbuck (late husband Kelly), Michael McSpadden, Jimmy Phillips and spouse Rita, Cathy Byers and spouse Steve, Brent Hamilton, Christi Habrock and spouse Kurt, and Chad Clark; along with a host of great-nieces and great-nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit Dearman Funeral Home.

Michael James Truel

Michael James Truel, 77, passed away Aug. 3, 2021.

Michael was born July 4, 1944, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to James Franklin and Edith Helen (Semple) Truel.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Karen (Askey) Corona Truel; and sister-in-law Linda (Stearns) Truel.

Michael is survived by his wife Della (Ellison) Truel; daughter Angela Renee (Truel) Bergman and family; stepdaughters Melanie Plunkett and Shani Bryan and families; stepson Vic Corona and family; brothers Curt, Barry, and Patrick Truel and families; three granddaughters; one grandson; one great-granddaughter; and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, other family, and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Baggerley Funeral Home.

Richard Tonubbee Sr.

Richard Tonubbee Sr., 75, passed away July 29, 2021.

Richard was born July 3, 1946, in Hugo, Okla., to Samuel Tonubbee and Francis Irene (Beaver) Tonubbee.

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

Richard is survived by his wife Pat; children Robbee Tonubbee, Ricky Tonubbee and spouse Amanda, and Tubby Smith; sister Judy Parks; grandchildren Zachary Tonubbee and spouse Mattie, Cody Tonubbee and spouse Micha, Amanda Smith, Tucker Tonubbee, and Toby Tonubbee; great-grandchildren Miles Tonubbee and Bentlee Tonubbee; along with numerous nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home.

Sims Robert Fowler Jr.

Sims Robert "Bob" Fowler Jr., 88, passed away July 15, 2021.

Bob was born June 5, 1933, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Sims and Mary Fowler.

He was preceded in death by his brother Gene.

Bob is survived by his best friend and companion Sharon Stiles; son Robert Peter; sister Linda Folger; brothers Frank and John; and sister Sue Avants.

For the full obituary, please visit Demuth Funeral Home.

**Larry Wayne Statham**

Larry Wayne Statham, 83, passed away May 6, 2021.

Larry was born April 4, 1938, in Tulsa, Okla., to Joe Frank "Bill" and Mildred "Tooter" (Joyce) Statham.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Larry is survived by his wife Sandra; daughters Cynthia Statham Potter, Linda Statham, Donna Statham Shepherd and spouse Steve, and Tracy Avignone Tice and spouse Jason; sisters Betsy Statham Criswell and Joyce Statham Bridges; grandchildren Brandon Beavers and spouse Aiden, Alan Potter and spouse Michele, Tyler Potter Sakis, Casey Potter and spouse Gina, Kyle Shepherd, Ty Tice and spouse Katelyn, and Cole Tice; six great-grandchildren; and beloved nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit Luginbuel Funeral Home.

Kevin Eugene Honeycutt

Kevin Eugene Honeycutt, 41, passed away Aug. 5, 2021.

Kevin was born Dec. 16, 1979, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Gene Honeycutt and Judy McKee.

He was preceded in death by his father; and grandmother Ethel McKee.

Kevin is survived by his parents Larry and Judy (McKee) Chaney; aunt Trudy Caraway; numerous cousins; and a host of other family, friends, and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit Miller and Miller Funeral Home.

Ryan Walker Brown

Ryan Walker Brown, 23, passed away July 30, 2021.

Ryan was born June 16, 1998, to Rick Don Brown and Kelis Ayn Whisenhunt.

He was preceded in death by his maternal grandfather Ronnie Whisenhunt; and paternal grandmother Josey Burns.

Ryan is survived by his mother; father and spouse Melissa; maternal grandmother Sherri Ann Julian; step-grandmother Vickie Whisenhunt; paternal grandfather Tom Burns; brother Trinton Case Brown; step-sister Maegan Russell and spouse Kolton; step-brother Dekon Daniel; step-sister Ashlie Clark and spouse Stephen; step-brother Kevin Bryant and spouse Ashley; uncle Kenney Whisenhunt and spouse Traci; aunts Donna Simmons and spouse Malcolm, Virginia Switzer, Candice Fredrick and spouse Bear; great-aunt Dona Trapp; and a multitude of cousins, nieces, nephews, and friends that he called brothers.

For the full obituary, please visit Miller and Miller Funeral Home.

Gabriel Reece Going

Gabriel Reece Going, 36, passed away Aug. 10, 2021.

Gabriel was born June 22, 1985, in Ada, Okla., to Everett Dale and Bertha Lou (Carterby) Going.

He was preceded in death by his father; stepmom Margie Going; grandparents John Amos and Mary Carterby; uncle Adam Carterby; brother Maurice Going; and cousin Justin Carterby.

Gabriel is survived by Diana McKinney; his mother and partner Buck Tisho; sons Krypton Going, Thunder McKinney, and Kendon Harley; brothers Mario Going and spouse Stephanie, John Going, Kevin Carterby and spouse Tyiesha Perry, and Ryan Williston; uncles Bob Simpson and spouse Melinda, Ray Carterby, and Greg Allen and spouse Lura; aunts Eula Lufkin and Elsie Kuziel; nieces MaKayla Williams (Going), Isabella Carterby, Za'leia Carterby, Gypsie Going, and Genavie Carpenter; nephews Shawn James (Going), and Laicen Going; along with several cousins, other relatives, and many friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Brumley Funeral Home.

Dorothy Jane Beller

Dorothy Jane Beller, 80, passed away Aug. 15, 2021.

Dorothy was born Oct. 13, 1940, in Glover, Okla., to William and Pearley Mae Louis.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Isaac Beller; stepson Kenny Bennett; grandchildren Kloeey Beller and Jaxon Beller; brothers Byars Louis, Nelson Louis, Jesse Louis, Benjamin Louis and William Louis; sister Mary Davis; and nephew Jeremy Louis.

Dorothy is survived by her sons Lance Beller and spouse Amy, Brandon Beller and spouse Crystal, and Daniel Beller and spouse Vicky; daughters Lesa Jester and spouse Tom, Loretta Billingsley and spouse George, Lola Beason and spouse Jim, and Lou Ellen Davis and spouse Sam; brother Ray Louis; sister Lillian Louis; grandchildren Destiny Beller, Mekenzie Beller, Abigail Beller, Jakobey Beller, Kalin Beller, and Kaira Beller; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Brumley Funeral Home.

Dora Mae Battiest Ward

Dora Mae Battiest Ward, 79, passed away Aug. 12, 2021.

Dora was born April 9, 1942, in Broken Bow, Okla., to Eron James King and Olene Battiest Orona.

She was preceded in death by her parents; brothers Jessie Orona, Leroy Orona, Johnny Orona, James King, and Gregorio Orono; and sisters Madeline Baker and Nancy Orona.

Dora is survived by her son Marvin Others; daughters Carisa Wickson and spouse Wesley, Martha Taylor and spouse Hobie, and Gladys Perkins and spouse Thomas; 18 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; brothers Levin King and spouse Tomi, Lewis Orona and spouse Janeth, and Mario Orona and spouse Dalana; sister Darlene Gonzalez and spouse Rolando; along with a host of other family, friends, and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit Miller and Miller Funeral Home.



Evelyn Rose Miller

Evelyn Rose Miller, 77, passed away July 13, 2021.

Evelyn was born Dec. 29, 1943, in Overbrook, Okla., to Lula (Marris) Parker.

She was preceded in death by her mother; brothers Dolph Baptiste and Kenneth Baptiste; and grandparents Arch and Sallie (Farve) Marris.

Evelyn is survived by her children Angela Snyder and spouse Clarence, Alden Williams, Aaron Williams, Shay Miller and spouse Angela, and Shauana Hartman and spouse Phillip; grandchildren Slade Kendrick, Arianna Williams, Easton and Weston Miller, Timberly and Stryker Hartman, and Payton White; aunt Allie Johnson; special cousin Uwanah Watts, dear friend Debbie (Farve) Duran; sister-in-law Betty Baptiste; sister Yvonne Vansill; and numerous beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins.

For the full obituary, please visit Griffin-Hillcrest Funeral Home.

**David Lee Isbell**

David Lee Isbell, 45, passed away July 13, 2021.

David was born Jan. 3, 1976, in Antlers, Okla., to Douglas Eugene and Janis Almedia (Staggs) Isbell.

He was preceded in death by paternal grandparents Clarence and Doris Isbell; maternal grandparents Travis and Ozella Staggs; uncle Jim Staggs; brother-in-law Dusty Hill; cousin Kriste Jackson; and aunts Jerri Petty and Judi Staggs.

David is survived by his wife Amy; parents Doug and Janis Isbell; mother-in-law and father-in-law David and Guyla "Sudie" Hill; aunts Bonnie Henderson, Doris Perry, and Sally Hallows and spouse Michael; uncles Raymond "Whitey" Staggs, and Bobby Staggs and spouse Kendra; along with numerous cousins, other relatives, and many dear friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Brown's Funeral Service.

**Steve Allen Dillworth**

Steve Allen Dillworth, 64, passed away July 5, 2021.

Steve was born Jan. 3, 1957, in Alabama, to David Lee and Lois Dillworth.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister Yvonne Dillworth Gartica.

Steve is survived by his son Steve Dillworth Jr.; brothers Charles Dillworth, Theodore Dillworth, Dave Dillworth and Sue Ann Bostic, Clifford Dillworth and spouse Sharon, Gerald Dillworth, Kenneth Dillworth, and Craig Dillworth; along with a host of nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Miller and Miller Funeral Home.

**Willard Brian Ingram**

Willard Brian Ingram, 54, passed away Oct. 28, 2020.

Willard was born June 6, 1966, in Talihina, Okla., to Carroll Ingram and Jean Hardy.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister LouAnn Motes; and brother Steve Ingram.

Willard is survived by nephews Andy Motes and spouse Erica, along with their four children J.J., Celi, Aiden, and Leo, and Colton Ingram; nieces Charla Osterdock and Kamri, and Alisa Motes; double cousins Anita Coots and Rhonda Ingram; paternal uncles Jack Ingram, and Wayne Ingram and spouse Bertha; maternal uncles Bobby Ludlow and spouse Ruby, Roy Ludlow and spouse Margaret, and Gaylon Ludlow and spouse Rose; aunt Lucille Ludlow; special friend Francis Fragola; along with a host of other family, friends, and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit Miller and Miller Funeral Home.

**Michael Alan Bronaugh**

Michael Alan Bronaugh, 63, passed away July 13, 2021.

Michael was born Feb. 13, 1958, in Houston, TX, to Louis Alan and Charda Pierce Bronaugh.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents Louis H. and Nina Faye Halliday Bronaugh, and Chardo (C.W.) and Pat Stagner Pierce; his father; and his brother Timothy Edward Bronaugh.

Michael is survived by his faithful canine friend Ace; his mother; siblings Christina and Woody Peavy, and Belinda and Craig Teer; niece Christa Ogden; nephews Alan Randolph and spouse Kellie, Rand Teer, and Perrin Teer; grandniece Ava Ogden; grandnephews Jason Little Thunder and Timothy Michael Randolph; and numerous extended family members.

For the full obituary, please visit The Springs Funeral Service.

**Lucretia Noah**

Lucretia Noah, 57, passed away July 19, 2021.

Lucretia was born Oct. 25, 1963, in Talihina, Okla., to Jerry Sr. and Amanda (Holmes) Noah.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters Freda Tisho and Beverly Noah; brothers Michael Noah, Greg Noah, and Jerry Noah Jr.; stepfather Jacob James; and granddaughter Kynzlie Wells.

Lucretia is survived by her daughters Latrisha Butler and spouse Tony, Amber McKinney and spouse D.J., and Michelle McKinney and spouse LaDarian; brothers Gary Noah and spouse Tamara, and Richard Jackson and spouse Jeanetta; sisters Reda Jessie and Roberta Sam and spouse Morris; grandchildren Monica, Tamia, A'Mya, Britton, T.J., C.J., and Jakryan; great-grandchild King Well; soon-to-be great-grandchild Layla; several nieces and nephews; and other relatives and many friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Brumley Funeral Home.

**Anthony John Noahubi**

Anthony John Noahubi, 48, passed away July 14, 2021.

Anthony was born Sept. 6, 1972, in Dallas, TX., to Cornelius Noahubi and Jacqueline Davison.

He was preceded in death by his mother; and brother Raymond Davis Jr.

Anthony is survived by his wife Mariea; children Amanda Moore, Chelci Moore, Anthony "A.J." Moore III, Brandon Moore, Derek Moore, Regina Noahubi, and Rebekah Noahubi; sister Tricia Noahubi; and grandchildren Asher Moore, Joseph Noahubi, Jonathan Noahubi, and Ossi Hishi Brandon.

For the full obituary, please visit Serenity Funeral Home.

**David Bryan Carter**

David Bryan Carter, 61, passed away July 14, 2021.

David was born Jan. 23, 1960, in Albany, OR., to Tom and Wanda Lingo.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister Diane Naegele-Huie.

David is survived by his wife Karen; children Sean Carter, Jason Carter, Michael Carter, Justin Bruns, Amanda Carter, and David Bryan Carter Jr.; eleven grandchildren; sisters Anita Carlson, Wynnette Gentemann, and Cheryl Taylor; and brother Michael Carter.

For the full obituary, please visit Crown Memorial Centers.

**Jo Nell Fields**

Jo Nell (Guest) Fields, 90, passed away July 21, 2021.

Jo Nell was born Oct. 5, 1930, to Henry "Boots" and Millie (Webster) Guest.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband J.W. "Bo" Fields; sons Roger and Curtis Fields; grandson Matthew Fields; great-grandson Dustin Harrison; great-granddaughter Katie Hall; daughter-in-law Lynette Fields; brothers Henry, Don, Bill, Larry, and D.D. Guest; and sister Margie Claborn.

Jo Nell is survived by sons Billy Fields and spouse Vickie, and James Field and spouse Wayla; daughters Sharon Wolf and spouse Frank, Rita Harrison and spouse Dennis, Janice Jones and spouse Mike, and Tina Jones and spouse Kris; daughter-in-law Sue Fields; 25 grandchildren; 51 great-grandchildren; and 23 great-great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit Miller and Miller Funeral Home.

**Jonathan Edwin David**

Jonathan Edwin David, 85, passed away July 20, 2021.

Jonathan was born April 17, 1936, in Sobel, Okla., to John Virgil David Sr. and Mary Jaine (Frazier) David.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brother John Virgil "JV" David; sister Delores David; and sons-in-law Jimmy Newton and Jimmy Bastible.

Jonathan is survived by his daughter Jonnie Lynn Newton; granddaughters Onawa Hughes and spouse James, Amanda Miller and spouse Jason, and Tawana "TJ" Newton; great-grandchildren Jonathan, Quentin, Taran, Nikki, Corey, Autumn, Samantha, Tyler, Jasie, Austin, Andrew and Hateya; great-great-grandchildren Jazzmyne, Anthony, Aiden, Allison, Jayce, Braiyron, Brooklynn, Alan, and two on the way; special cousin Scott David; niece Mary Marie; along with a host of other family friends and loved ones.

For the full obituary, please visit Miller and Miller Funeral Home.

**Anna Maureen Carlile**

Anna Maureen (Ludlow) Carlile, 69, passed away July 23, 2021.

Anna was born Dec. 31, 1951, in Honobia, Okla., to Preston Ludlow and Carrie Ward Ludlow.

She was preceded in death by her parents; sisters Susie Jacobs, Emmie Sealy, and Pearl Hope.

Anna is survived by her husband Mack; daughter Angela Carlile; niece Effie Ludlow; sisters Lodean Starr and Virre Johnson; brothers Preston Ludlow Jr. and spouse Joanne, Clarence Ludlow and spouse Vivian, James Ludlow and spouse Debbie, and Elvis Ludlow and spouse Christine; many nephews, nieces, and cousins; along with a host of friends.

For the full obituary, please visit McCarn Funeral Home.

**Elsie M. Lewis**

Elsie M. (Peters) Lewis, 85, passed away Aug. 16, 2021.

Elsie was born Sept. 14, 1935, in Lawton, Okla., to Caroline M. Jefferson and Jackson Peters.

She was preceded in death by her parents; Mr. and Mrs. John C. Carnes; her husband Raymond; children Sonya G. Lewis, Gary D. Lewis, Michael K. Lewis, Raymond Eugene Lewis, and Eddie R. Lewis; infant sister Eliza J. Peters; brother Danny M. Carnes; and best friend and sister-in-law of over 75 years Bertha G. Lewis.

Elsie is survived by her children Deborah K. Grater and spouse Richard, Billy W. Lewis, and Dickie R. and Lisa Lewis; sister Lucretia J. Johnson; sister-in-law Margaret Tenequer; daughter-in-law Lac-Quita Lewis; 14 grandchildren; 21 great-grandchildren; 16 great-great-grandchildren and two more on the way; numerous nephews, nieces, cousins, and church family members she considered her own and that she loved immensely.

For the full obituary, please visit Brown's Funeral Home.

**Janice Usry Roberts**

Janice Usry Roberts, 89, passed away July 22, 2021.

Janice was born Dec. 21, 1931, in Old Bennington, Okla., to Woodrow and Mildred Usry.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Frank; brothers Homer Lee Usry, and Charles Ray Usry and spouse Ruth; sisters Ramola Walker and spouse John, and Geraldine Usry; brothers-in-law Jess Roberts, Gerald Roberts, and Henry Davis; sister-in-law Emma Davis; daughter-in-law Carolyn Roberts; son-in-law Tim Wright; daughter Martha Jane Looney; and granddaughter Mindy Kay Roberts.

Janice is survived by her children Don Roberts and spouse Cathy, Larry Roberts, Edward Roberts and spouse Vickie, David Roberts and spouse Lori, and Idanel Wright; sisters Donelda Blanton; 11 grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; and two great-great grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home.

**Jonathan Neil Caldwell**

Jonathan Neil Caldwell, 52, passed away July 23, 2021.

Jonathan was born July 23, 1969, in Talihina, Okla., to Willie Wilson Caldwell and Hannah June Wilson Caldwell.

He was preceded in death by his parents; sister Carolyn Ruth Grigsby; maternal grandparents Albert and Helen Wisdom; and paternal grandparents William Wilson Caldwell and Evelyn Rector-Caldwell.

Jonathan is survived by sons Jonathan Paul Caldwell and Isiah Tankersley; daughter Bethany Caldwell; brothers James Caldwell, and Jerry Don Caldwell and spouse Mandy; sister Junell Davis and spouse Bennie Taylor; nephews and nieces Brandon Stewart, Tiffani Morrison, Alisha Caldwell, Amber Che Caldwell, Justice Caldwell, Noah Caldwell, Garrick Caldwell, Jaylyn Smith, Jaylee Smith, Dakota Caldwell, Jasper Morrison, Jeremy Caldwell, Amy Caldwell-Walden, and James Caldwell; and a host of other relatives and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Brumley Funeral Home.

**Harold Eugene Kirkes**

Harold "Buddy" Eugene Kirkes, 76, passed away July 31, 2021.

Buddy was born Aug. 16, 1944, in Talihina, Okla., to Lola Vern (Potts) and Robert Kirkes.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Janet Kirkes; and siblings Harvey Kirkes, Mark Kirkes, Eddy Kirkes, and Kathy Burkhart.

Buddy is survived by his children Ray Allen Lawrence and spouse Teretha, and Angie House; grandchildren Ricky Lawrence, Garren Lawrence, Delani Lawrence, and Brett Wantland; great-grandchildren Grayson Lawrence and Clayton Lawrence; sisters Juanita Angel and spouse Ellis, Judy Kirkes, and Helen Lenz and spouse Tom; brother Jerry Kirkes and spouse Vera; special friend Susan; and numerous extended family.

For the full obituary, please visit McCarn Funeral Service.

**Sylvia Louise Sims**

Sylvia Louise (Anderson) Sims, 88, passed away July 29, 2021.

Sylvia was born Dec. 22, 1932, in Yanush, Okla., to Lejah and Marie Anderson.

She was preceded in death by her husband Herbert; her parents; and brothers Leon Ray, William Leo, Richard, and Kenny.

Sylvia is survived by sons Bill Sims and spouse Marsha, and Robert Sims and spouse Jeanie; brothers John Anderson and spouse Jeanne, and Jerry Anderson and spouse Sheila; sisters Phyllis Cable and spouse Wayne, Betty Wetwiska, and Sue Anderson; sister-in-law Diane Anderson; many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and other extended family.

For the full obituary, please visit McCarn Funeral Service.

**Daniel Scott Baergen**

Daniel Scott Baergen, 52, passed away July 15, 2021.

Daniel was born July 26, 1968, in Albuquerque, N.M., to Major (Ret.) Jacob Daniel Baergen and Alice Jane Baergen.

He is survived by his wife Teri; his parents; daughters Jamie Baergen and Kristin Wynn; stepdaughter Ressa Inman; sister Shannan Leigh; nephew and niece Matthew and Mariah Provost; and several aunts, uncles, and cousins.

For the full obituary, please visit New Tacoma Funeral Home.

**Obituary Policy**

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

The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes.

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

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

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

Send official obituary notices to:

Biskinik
PO Box 1210
Durant OK 74702
or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Dancer named Class Marshal



The University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) honors local student Madelynn Dancer as Class Marshal for the 2021 College of Business spring graduating class.

Students earn the title of Class Marshal for achieving the highest academic records within their colleges during their time at Central.

Madelynn Dancer is a Business Administration - Legal Studies Major with a 4.0 GPA in the College of Business. A Soper, Oklahoma, native, Dancer is a member of the President's Leadership Council, College of Business 2B Leaders, Student Alumni Association, president of the UCO Pre-Law Society, and served as a University Suites resident assistant on campus for three consecutive years.

In addition to receiving several scholarships from the UCO Foundation, she was awarded the Outstanding Freshman, Outstanding Junior, and Outstanding Senior Student Leader Awards and the 2019 Resident Assistant Rookie of the Year and 2020 Resident Assistant of the Year.

Dancer said, "I was nervous coming from a small town to a bigger university, but UCO quickly became my home! I am thankful for the fantastic education I received here and the opportunities I experienced to grow as a leader."

Dancer is pursuing a legal degree with an emphasis on American Indian law at the University of Oklahoma College of Law. She plans to practice Native American law, to serve her tribe, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and corporate law.

First presented in 1994, the Class Marshal title has become a proud Central tradition. The honorees wear a bronze graduation gown and a special stole during the spring commencement ceremonies, signifying the highest degree of academic excellence.

Madelynn Dancer is the daughter of Angela and Eddie Dancer of Soper, Okla., and granddaughter of David and Jonell Smith, also of Soper.

Championship pitching for Miller



Jackson Miller, 13, of Marlow, Oklahoma, pitched in the championship game of A Perfect Game World Series baseball tournament in Destin, Florida, beating AfterMath Baseball out of Odessa, Texas, 4-3.

Jackson plays for Mojo Baseball out of Moore, Oklahoma.

His parents are Amanda and Bryan Miller of Marlow, Oklahoma.

Jones to coach at Charleston Southern basketball program



Ashley Jones has joined the staff of the Charleston Southern women's basketball team in Charleston, South Carolina.

Jones joins the Bucs as an assistant coach and brings experience through ATL Bucks Basketball, Nike ProSkills EYBL Basketball and Oklahoma Wesleyan University.

She has had 10-plus years of administrative and coaching experience within collegiate athletic departments and youth athletic organizations and worked in multiple levels throughout her professional career.

Jones graduated from Oklahoma Wesleyan University in December 2009 with a bachelor's degree in psychology. She added her MBA with an emphasis in marketing in December 2013. She furthered her education at the Steiner Education Group in Arlington, Texas, at the Texas Center for Massage Therapy, graduating in 2016.

Before serving as a head coach and skills coach with the ATL Bucks Basketball program, Jones served as the Director of Basketball Operations, Head Coach, and Recruiting Coordinator for Nike ProSkills EYBL Basketball from July 2016-2019. While working with Nike Basketball, she managed all travel logistics, social media, marketing, and analytical data systems for team rosters and recruiting submissions. She also served as the 17U National Head Coach.

Her previous collegiate experience came from Oklahoma Wesleyan University where she served as the Assistant Women's Basketball Coach, Recruiting Coordinator, and adjunct professor. She served as the head women's JV coach and handled scouting reports, game day coordination, and spread social media awareness of the program.

"I am extremely grateful to join Coach Garcia and Buc Nation," Jones said. "I believe in Coach Garcia's vision for the program and excited to start this journey with her and the staff! It is a blessing to have an opportunity to work with a staff, team, and athletic department that believes in doing the little things every day to serve and lead. I can't wait to get to work! GO BUCS!"

Burge Veteran of the Month



Reuben Burge, Coalgate, Okla. (District 12), was September's Veteran of the Month.

Burge served in the U.S. Army for two years, beginning Jan. 9, 1953, where he achieved the rank of Corporal.

He served as Section Leader in the 3rd Section A Battery of the 537 Field Artillery Battalion Unit serving in a leadership

role over seven soldiers; was stationed at Ft. Sill in Lawton, Okla., was sent to Ft. Carson, Colorado for training for the Korean War; and served as Honor Guard at funerals, performing the 21-gun salute.

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



Gracie Mae Scott

Gracie Mae Scott was born on July 27, 2021, at 11:59 a.m., weighing 9 lbs and 5oz at Chickasaw Nation Medical Center in Ada, Oklahoma.

She is the daughter of Joe and Amanda Scott, and a little sister to Eli and Wyatt.

She is the granddaughter of Greg and Donna Goff and Mark and Julie Scott.

70 years for the Evans'



Congratulations to Martha and Clyde Evans of Alabama on their 70th anniversary.

Mrs. Evans is a retired teacher, and Mr. Evans is a retired professor from Auburn University.

They plan to have a quiet celebration of their anniversary with immediate family.

Allison Smith receives PhD



With the help of the Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program, Allison Smith has received her Ph.D. in Exercise Science from the University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health. The Arnold School houses the number one Exercise Science department in the country.

"I would like to graciously thank the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and specifically the Higher Education Program for the help through both graduate degrees," said Smith.

95 years for Gladys Holt



Gladys Bowden Holt of Stillwater recently celebrated her 95th birthday at her home with family and friends in attendance.

Mrs. Holt was born July 25, 1926, at Frogville, Oklahoma, the oldest daughter of R.O. and Annie Bowden. She married Walon Dare Holt on May 18, 1946, and the couple raised six children.

They were former residents of Thackerville, Oklahoma, before retiring to Ardmore, Oklahoma. Walon passed away in 1994.

Baker earns Masters degree



Army Reserve Col. Justin Baker completed a two-year distance education program, receiving a master's degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College, July 23, 2021.

The Army War College provides the Army's senior professional military education.

Lt. Gen. Laura Potter, Deputy Chief of Staff for the intelligence of the United States Army, presided and spoke to the class of 382 senior officers, international officers, and civilians serving at the Senior Executive Service level or above.

Next, Baker will serve as the Deputy Chief of Staff of the 350th Civil Affairs Command in Pensacola, Florida.

Westes celebrate 60 years



Michael and Diana West celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary in September.

Both attended Hawthorne High School in Los Angeles. They met, fell in love, and then married on September 2, 1961, in Las Vegas.

Together they raised three sons, Dr. Michael West of Broken Bow, Oklahoma, David West of Bel

Air, Maryland and Darin West of Lindsay, Oklahoma.

They are loved by many grandchildren and great-grandchildren. All of the family join in the celebration of their 60th Wedding Anniversary.

Pittmans celebrate 71 years



Ray and Geraldine (Turnbull) Pittman will be celebrating their 71st Anniversary on October 17, 2021.

Last year, they had a small celebration for their 70th Anniversary due to COVID at Kemp Baptist Church in Kemp, Oklahoma. Even with COVID, they had attendees from Arizona, Texas and Oklahoma.

Their four children and spouses and most of their grandchildren were able to attend. Cousins came from Conroe, Texas and Oklahoma City and friends from Oklahoma. Their granddaughter-in-law, Elisabeth Trujillo, was the event planner for the ceremony.



Thompson graduates

Garison Thompson recently graduated from University of Arkansas Ft. Smith with a double major in Chemistry and Biology.

Garison graduated with a grade point average of 3.88. He is currently employed at the Ruben White

clinic in Poteau, Oklahoma as a lab technician.

Thompson is the son of John and Christi Thompson of Poteau and the grandson of Gary and Elaine Youree of Heavener. He is married to Michaela Stacy Thompson.

He thanks the Choctaw Nation for the support of his college career and future employment opportunities.

Dodds receive recognition



Sabra Dodd was selected for the Presidents Honor Roll at the University of Central Oklahoma.

Dodd was also awarded an Excellence in Writing and Academic Achievement award.

Sabra thanks Choctaw Higher Education for their assistance in her education.

After graduating with a Bachelors degree in Kinesiology from Oklahoma City University, Harley Dodd continued his education at Oklahoma City Community College.

With the help of the Choctaw Nation Career Development program Harley earned an additional degree in Physical Therapy and now practices at McBride Orthopedics in Oklahoma City.

The Dodds are the great-grandchildren of Edmund Cleveland Noel, grandchildren of the late Lawrence Cleveland Noel and their grandmother, Peggy Noel, who resides in Edmond, OK.

16 years for Serenity Redenius



Happy Sweet 16 to Serenity Redenius.

"We are so incredibly proud of the sweet young lady you have grown into. Can't believe you're already 16 years old. Doesn't seem like that long ago you were just a little bitty 6 lb baby.

We hope that you have an amazing year full of laughter and fun. You are a go-getter and we know you'll go far in life and accomplish so much. Love you to the moon and back.

Love, Dad, Mom, DJ, Devin, Neanie, Grandma, and all your aunts, uncles, and cousins."

Members attend code camp



Eastern Oklahoma State University hosted the first Native Americans Who Code summer camp.

Choctaw tribal members in attendance were Briana Evans and Nathan Crouch.

Nine students from local schools participated in the four-day camp learning about logic and algorithms, flowcharts, Scratch and learned to write a simple C++ program.



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Wreath laying ceremony



On August 22, the American Legion Riders kicked off day one of their annual Legacy Run. The more than 200 motorcycle riders made a pit stop in Tvshka Homma, Oklahoma, to lay a wreath in honor of the Native Americans buried at the Choctaw Nation Veterans Cemetery and the multitude of others who have served in the U.S. military through the years.

Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. were in attendance and took part in the ceremony.

Photos by Chris Jennings



Photo by Chris Jennings

Oklahoma LT Governor visits Cultural Center

Lieutenant Governor, Matt Pinnell recently visited the new Choctaw Nation Cultural Center, where he met staff and was given a tour.

Pinnell was visibly impressed with the construction and exhibits and took several pictures along the way.



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Choctaw Nation Cultural Services

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Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma offers our tribal elders the ability to live in a residential independent living community that is age-restricted with residents who are able to live on their own. In this type of community, seniors maintain independence for as long as is desired or possible.

Independent Elder Housing is comprised of units designed for one person or one person and their spouse. Each unit is equipped with Energy Star appliances: refrigerator, stove, central heat and air, washer and dryer. Some site locations offer a community building, available exclusively to residents and their guests. Each site is overseen by a Rental Manager and Maintenance Technician responsible for the overall operations and physical integrity of each unit and the property.

Eligibility requirements for the Independent Elder Housing program are:

- Applicant must have a CDIB card
- Applicant household must meet income guidelines
- Applicants must be elderly or near-elderly (age 55 or older)
- Household members must pass a nationwide background check
- Tenant rent in the Independent Elder Program is based on 15% of the gross adjusted income for the household.

Independent Elder Housing is currently offered at the following locations:

Antlers	Hartshorne	Smithville
Atoka	Hugo	Stigler
Broken Bow	Idabel	Talihina
Calera	Poteau	Wilburton
Coalgate	Savanna	

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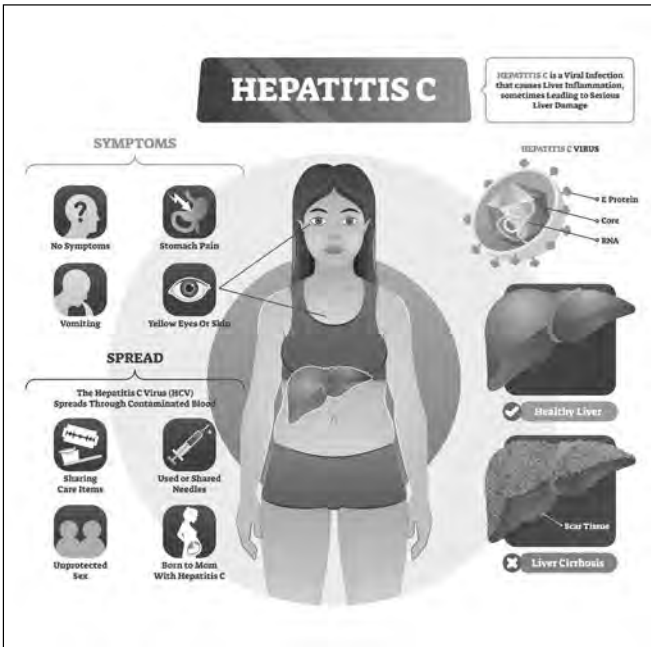
Most hepatitis C can be cured with simple treatment

By Chris Jennings

A 2020 report by the Centers for Disease Control showed that hepatitis C (HCV) was the most common bloodborne infection in the United States. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), only 20% of those infected with HCV know they are infected. The Choctaw Nation is working to improve both of those statistics.

HCV is a contagious viral infection that causes liver inflammation. Your liver is responsible for processing nutrients, filtering blood and fighting infections. Inflammation reduces the ability of the liver to do its job, leading to liver disease, cancer and even death.

According to Indian Health Services, in 2015, the infection rates of acute HCV American Indians and Alaska Natives were double that for non-Hispanic whites. The numbers don't get better across other ethnic groups. It's six times that of Hispanics and non-Hispanic Blacks and eighteen times that of Asians and Pacific Islanders.



CDC photo

Hepatitis C is a disease that affects the liver. If left untreated, the liver isn't able to filter toxins, which could lead to liver disease, cancer and even death.

Because many people associate HCV with drug use and sharing needles, they think they don't need to be tested. While that may be the most common method of transmission, it's not the only way, says Candace Rose, a Clinical Pharmacist for the Choctaw Nation, "For those born from 1945 to 1965, blood transfusions were the source of most cases of HCV." Widespread screening of the nationwide blood supply beginning in 1992 has stopped that.

Other causes of HCV are:

- **Sharing drug-injection equipment.** Today, most people become infected with hepatitis C by sharing needles, syringes, or any other equipment used to prepare and inject drugs.
- **Birth.** Approximately 6% of infants born to infected mothers will get hepatitis C.
- **Healthcare exposures.** Although uncommon, people can become infected when healthcare professionals do not follow the proper steps needed to prevent the spread of bloodborne infections.
- **Sex with an infected person.** While uncommon, hepatitis C can spread during sex, though it has been reported more often among men who have sex with men.
- **Unregulated tattoos or body piercings.** Hepatitis C can spread when getting tattoos or body piercings in unlicensed facilities, informal settings or with non-sterile instruments.
- **Sharing personal items.** People can get infected by sharing glucose monitors, razors, nail clippers, toothbrushes and other items that may have come into contact with infected blood, even in amounts too small to see.

One of the things that make it hard to find people with HCV so that they can be treated is the potential lack of symptoms. Many people can live for years without knowing they have HCV. When symptoms do occur, it's often mild fatigue, which can be attributed to many different things unrelated to HCV.

Rose reiterates this saying, "People with chronic hepatitis C can often have no symptoms and don't feel sick."

When symptoms do occur, they often are fever, dark urine, yellow skin or eyes, stomach pain, light-colored stool, joint pain and nausea.

HCV-infected people have a 75% chance of developing a chronic infection, so early screening is important.

CDC recommends you get tested for hepatitis C if you:

- Are 18 years of age and older
- Are pregnant (get tested during each pregnancy)
- Currently inject drugs (get tested regularly)
- Have ever injected drugs, even if it was just once or many years ago
- Have HIV
- Have abnormal liver tests or liver disease
- Are on hemodialysis
- Received donated blood or organs before July 1992
- Received clotting factor concentrates before 1987
- Have been exposed to blood from a person who has hepatitis C
- Were born to a mother with hepatitis C

ant. "Chronic hepatitis C can result in serious, even life-threatening health problems like cirrhosis and liver cancer," said Rose.

Rates of new HCV infections have increased by more than 60% from 2015 to 2019. And in 2019, more than 63% of HCV infections occurred among adults 20-39 years of age. With new cases of HCV on the rise among young adults, the CDC recommends that all adults over the age of 18 get tested for HCV.

The good news is HCV is curable. "Getting tested for hepatitis C is important because treatments can cure most people with hepatitis C in 8 to 12 weeks," said Rose.

Treatment can cure 90% of people with HCV, reducing the chances of severe complications or death.

Testing and treatment for HCV is available at most CNHSA facilities. If you haven't been tested or think you may have come into contact with the virus, talk to your care provider for testing and treatment if needed.



October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By Chris Jennings

According to the World Health Organization, as of 2021, breast cancer is the most common cancer in the world. Of those cases, Native American women are more likely to get breast cancer than white women.

The news isn't all somber, though. In recent years there has been a reduction in female breast cancer in women aged 50 and older. Death rates have also been declining for about 40 years.

Because many symptoms of breast cancer aren't noticeable without a professional screening, getting an annual mammogram and clinical breast exams can reduce your risk of dying from breast cancer. The common recommendation for beginning mammograms is at 40 years old. However, family history and other risk factors could mean you may need to start annual mammograms and clinical breast screenings sooner.

Wendy Brown, Unit Manager, RN at Talihina, said, "Most prevalent is someone around their 40s or older, but we do have patients who are in their 20s and their 30s."

It's not just women who can be diagnosed with breast cancer. All bodies have breast tissue and are at risk of developing cancer, including men. Male breast cancer often has the same symptoms as

females. A lump in the breast is usually under the nipple and areola (the dark skin area at the center of the breast).

If you find a lump or have another symptom, it's important not to delay reporting it to your physician. Survival rates for both men and women increase with early detection.

Brown stresses the importance of reporting any unusual findings early.

"If you catch it early, your treatment could be for a cure, where if you wait too long, it might be advanced, and they're just able to treat the symptoms and keep it [cancer] at bay," explained Brown.

Things to look for in both men and women are:

- A lump or thickening in or near the breast or in the underarm area
- A change in the size or shape of the breast
- Dimpling or puckering in the skin of the breast
- A nipple turned inward into the breast
- Discharge (fluid) from the nipple
- Scaly, red, or swollen skin on the breast, nipple, or areola

If you've had a scare with a biopsy or a family history of cancer and are concerned, the Nation offers genetic testing to find if you have a gene that may predispose you to cancer. This early testing can help you and your family catch something well before a cancer diagnosis.

"It kind of helps them target what type of tests they're going to need in the future and what type of follow-up they're going to need," said Brown.

Choctaw National Health Services Authority can be reached on the My CNHSA app or at (918) 567-7000. If you do not live near a CNHSA Facility or are not eligible for services, the National Cancer Institute will guide you to an accredited mammogram provider by calling 1-800-4-CANCER.

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BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842
Nutrition ed and food demos October 6 and 19

DURANT 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773
Nutrition ed and food demos October 5 and 18

MCALISTER 3244 Afullotha Hina, 918-420-5716
Nutrition ed and food demos October 12 and 27

POTEAU 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431
Nutrition ed and food demos October 14 and 26

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Stuffed Peppers

- 1lb ground beef or bison
- Taco seasoning
- Parmesan cheese
- 1 can of low sodium diced tomatoes
- 1/2 Onion, diced
- 3 Red bell peppers
- 1-2 TBSP vegetable oil

Preparation

1. In a large skillet, brown the meat.
2. Add onion and a can of diced tomatoes to browned meat.
3. Slice peppers in half vertically.
4. Remove seeds and stems.
5. Lightly coat peppers with vegetable oil.
6. Pack each pepper with the meat mixture. Bake at 400 for 25 minutes or until peppers appear softened and browned on the edges.
7. Add parmesan cheese to taste.

Location	Days	Hours
Antlers 580-298-3161	1st & 2nd Tue. Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Atoka 580-889-5825	Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Battiest 580-241-5458	1st Tue. of Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Broken Bow 580-584-2746	Tue. & Thur. (except for Battiest & Smithville days)	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Durant 580-920-2100 x-83582	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Hugo 580-326-9707	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Idabel 580-286-2600 x-41113	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
McAlester 918-423-6335	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Poteau 918-649-1106	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Smithville 580-244-3289	1st Thur. of Every Month	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Spiro 918-962-5134	Wed., Thur., & Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Stigler 918-867-4211	Mon. & Tue.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Talihina 918-567-7000 x-6792	Daily Mon. - Fri.	8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Wilburton 918-465-5641	Mon. & Fri.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Mobile Clinic	Tues., Wed., & Thurs.	8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

More than just a job

By Shelia Kirven

Choctaw Nation is one of the most versatile and family-oriented places to work in Southeastern Oklahoma, offering positions within government, commerce and health entities, including casinos, restaurants, health systems, travel plazas and more.

Positions range from full-time or part-time to temporary. Some positions even have \$1,000 sign-on bonuses, which are listed in the title of the job opening.

The Choctaw Nation offers many associate benefits, including free access to Employee Health Clinics and Wellness Centers at no cost to the associate.

For a list of all associate benefits and information on how to begin your career with Choctaw Nation, visit <https://careers.choctawnation.com/>.

Applying for a career with the Choctaw Nation is relatively easy, thanks to the Choctaw Careers website.

The website can filter open positions by location or area (commerce, government or health) and allows a potential applicant to create a one-time profile.

The profile is always active, and the applicant can apply for positions from that profile by simply signing in. Resumes can be uploaded as well and help in auto-populating required fields.

If an applicant does not have internet access or has trouble with the website, they can go to any Choctaw Nation community center for assistance, call a recruiter at 800-522-6170 or send an email to recruiting@choctawnation.com.

Applicants can also text CHOCTAW to 22100 from their cellular device, and a recruiter will call or text back to request the applicant's information.

Amber Colwell, Staffing Manager for Durant Casino IT, suggests checking the website once a week to see all openings, as jobs are generally posted for seven days. After seven days, the recruiter sends the most qualified applicants through to the hiring manager and sets up interviews.

Some of the hot jobs available include cooks, valet attendants and EVS (environmental services).

Colwell encourages everyone who sets up a profile to be sure to include a phone number and email address.

She also recommends thinking about your passions and personality when applying for positions.

It is not unusual to hear of associates who began working for the Tribe part-time or temporarily staying and making a career.

"You could walk into the casino or the headquarters and randomly ask a person and have a good chance of hearing a similar story. Myself, I started at the casino in Pocola just out on the floor, and I was 19," commented Colwell. "In November, it will 10 years that I have been with the Nation and don't intend on leaving anytime soon. The whole recruiting team have pretty much the same story, people who started in EVS or at

the pool and are now part of the recruiting team."

When asked what it's like to work for Choctaw Nation, Colwell said, "It's definitely a great place to work for. There are multiple places you could be. If you join the team in one area and aren't happy for whatever reason, it doesn't mean you have to quit. You can explore other options." She went on to talk about the how the Tribe helps associates grow through the tuition reimbursement program and the associate learning and development program, where if you've never been a manager before but that's a goal you want to pursue, you can take classes. "They try to help you grow."

The recruiting teams work with tribal program participants in securing positions, such as Job for the Day, Employment Training Services, and Career Development. They also offer career counseling for potential applicants who may not know what they want to do or what to apply for. Colwell said, "I want to make sure we get people into a place where they are happy, and their needs are met with that position."

Interns are also hired for various positions in programs such as information technology and health services.

Blaine White, Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority HR recruiter said, "We offer internships in all sorts of different health fields. As Chief Batton says, 'We want to train our young Choctaws to come back and lead the Tribe.'"

Josh Potts said friends referred him to Choctaw Nation when he was looking for employment after COVID-19 hit and decimated the industry he had been part of for 25 years.

"I quickly found myself at 43 looking for a job in a market that was saturated with experienced people," explained Potts. "Everybody I talked to said, 'You need to get a job at the Nation because it's the place to be right now. It's the thing that's happening in Southeastern Oklahoma.'"

For Potts, it became clear that working for the Tribe was a great opportunity.

"Everyone I talked to had extremely positive things to say about their experience," Potts said.

He was hired as a Field Service Engineer Level 2 for the newly constructed Choctaw Cultural Center.

"I quickly dug in and started making friends and loved my job. After 25 years in the movie industry everything was fresh. I got to play with all the new AV equipment, cutting-edge electronics and an amazing sound system. Work was actually fun," explained Potts.

Little did he know he would break his leg two months later, and his teammates would need to cover his duties during the time he needed to take off and recover.

"It's an amazing feeling when you know you have something that's more than just a job or career. I have a work family that exemplifies responsibility, honor, accountability, servant leadership, teamwork and

CHOCTAW CAREERS

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Photos by Christian Toews

Jennifer Austin works at her computer in the Human Resources department inside the Choctaw Nation Headquarters.

integrity. Those are values I hope to honor in my work and as a person. The Choctaw Nation took a chance hiring me, and then in my time of need, stepped in and supported me with unwavering compassion. If that's not the action of a family, I don't know what is."

Jennifer Austin grew up in Duncan, Oklahoma, and put herself through LPN school. Her life took a hard turn because of alcohol and drugs.

After her father told her she should turn to her tribe, she hesitantly did so after being clean and sober for three months.

She had lost her nursing career and her children, not knowing where her future was going to take her.

She started walking from Norman to Durant --over 140 miles-- finally ending up at the casino in Durant.

According to Austin, she walked around for days and then began walking again south toward Texas. Around Colbert, Okla., she prayed that God would help her know what to do and where she belonged.

"I'm a firm believer that God will make a way," said Austin.

Looking up from the highway, she said the only lights she could see were from Choctaw Nation billboards. After walking back to the casino, roughly ten miles away, she boarded a casino transit and explained to the driver, Elijah, that she needed help. He advised her that she should visit the headquarters and drove her there.

Once at the headquarters, Austin told the receptionist she was Choctaw, clean and sober, and didn't know how to live. She worked with Tribal Membership to get her identification card. "The moment I had that identification card, it was a door opener for me to be able to get employment. Choctaw Nation from that moment has been a part of my recovery every step of the way."

She was able to get into a recovery home in Durant and began to take parenting classes. During the early months, she worked at McDonald's and saw people come through her line who worked for Choctaw Nation with their badges on.

According to Austin, Choctaw Nation was where she wanted to be, that the employees were so nice when they came through her line and she could tell they were living life happily. "They were part of something bigger than themselves, it seemed like, and I wanted to be a part of that."

She started in the Choctaw Job for the Day program, not knowing how to turn on a computer, and was a participant in the Tribe's Reintegration program.

"They really worked with me and met me where I was," explained Austin. "Everybody

that I have been around has accepted me as their friend; they don't look at my past."

Once Job for the Day ended, she could apply for positions, and she decided she wanted to be a recruiter.

According to Austin, she was willing to do whatever it would take to get her there, no matter how long it took.

She began putting in applications for a permanent position in anything she could be hired on full-time.

"I submitted 61 applicants and did 33 interviews, applying for everything from groundskeeper, environmental services to administrative assistants," said Austin.

She was offered a full-time position as a staffing coordinator, an entry-level position for a recruiter position, and is still working toward a recruiter position.

"I'm going to keep growing. There's no end for me, and I know that today," said Austin through tears.

Austin gets emotional when she talks about her journey to where she is today.

"It's been such a blessing because there have been so many people who have had the same background as I, same Choctaw tribal members who have been set apart by their own pride and had their lives changed. I've had a chance to be a part of that, to show them the way, to tell them my story. It's determination and persistence. It's no longer a sleeping giant to me," explained Austin. "This is huge. It's huge. I've seen Choctaw Nation's hand in everything. I work a lot of recovery programs and things and work with a lot of lost people, so to be able to show them direction, a possibility, and give them hope in Choctaw Nation, that's been huge in my own recovery and theirs. It's the restoration for people back to living a life worth living. That's the blessing I've had today to be where I'm at."

When talking about what it's like to work for Choctaw Nation, Austin said, "Anything I have needed, they have provided. That's what family does; they're there. That's what I feel like every time I walk in."

Austin recommends to applicants she works with to "show the hiring manager that you are willing to learn, going outside of yourself to do whatever it takes to do that."

"They saw something in me that I couldn't see in myself," explained Austin. "They didn't give me any special favors. These are all things that are opportunities for anybody. That's what makes me know that whatever circumstances I face in my life, I don't have to be scared because I have a whole tribe. There's a whole tribe behind me."



Joshua Potts works behind the scenes in the theater of the Choctaw Cultural Center.

THE CURIOSITY OF A PRINCE:
THE COUNT OF ARTOIS AND HIS ETHNOGRAPHIC CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

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Choctaw Nation Health Services

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When Choctaw children fall victim to abuse or neglect, they are temporarily placed into foster care until it is safe and appropriate to be reunified with their parents or caregivers. In 2020 Choctaw Nation had on average 55 tribal foster homes across Oklahoma. We need your help. Please call us to inquire more about how you can help.

Choctaw Nation Children & Family Services

COVID-19 vaccinations and treatment update

By Chris Jennings

The information in this article is current as of press time. For up-to-date information visit www.cdc.gov/coronavirus.

According to Indian Health Services (IHS), the COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected American Indian and Alaska Native populations across the country.

IHS states that American Indians and Alaska Natives have over 3.5 times higher infection rates than non-Hispanic whites, are over four times more likely to be hospitalized due to COVID-19 and have higher rates of mortality at younger ages than non-Hispanic whites.

This higher infection rate caused COVID-19 death rates among Native Americans to be higher across the U.S. than any other ethnic group. The sense of urgency that was created by these statistics may be why Native Americans now have the highest vaccination rates among any ethnic group.

According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as of September 14, 2021, 47.5% of Native Americans are fully vaccinated. Compare that with 37.9% of white, non-Hispanic people who are fully vaccinated.

Many people reported not wanting to get a vaccine because of its emergency use authorization from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In late August, the FDA approved the Pfizer vaccine for individuals 16 years of age and older.

In a statement from the FDA, Acting Commissioner Janet Woodcock, M.D. Said, "While millions of people have already safely received COVID-19 vaccines, we recognize that for some, the FDA approval of a vaccine may now instill additional confidence to get vaccinated. Today's milestone puts us one step closer to altering the course of this pandemic in the U.S."

Vaccine appointments are available at any Choctaw Nation clinic for those 18 and older. Those 12-18 years old can receive the Pfizer vaccine at the Durant, Poteau and Talihina locations.

To make an appointment to receive the vaccine, call 800-349-7026 ext. 6, use your myCNHSA app or visit my.cnhsa.com. For those outside of the Choctaw Nation, you can find vaccine availability near you at www.vaccines.gov.

Delta

There have been several different variants of the coronavirus; the latest and most aggressive is the Delta variant. In June of 2021, the 7-day moving average of daily reported cases was below 12,000. On July 27, 2021, the 7-day moving average of daily reported cases had jumped over 60,000. This surge in cases resembled the numbers before the COVID vaccine was widely available.

The Delta variant is a highly contagious strain of COVID-19, nearly twice that of previous variants. According to the Centers for Disease Control, it could cause more severe illnesses and infect more people.

The good news is that the vaccine has shown to be highly effective at preventing severe disease and death, including against the Delta variant. The amount of virus produced by this more contagious variant also goes down in vaccinated people who develop breakthrough infections.

As the vaccination numbers increase, the CDC says it's important to still use all the prevention strategies available, including wearing a mask indoors while in public places. This layered approach to fighting COVID-19 will help to stop transmission and stop the epidemic.

Breakthrough infections

Being vaccinated doesn't mean you don't have to worry about getting COVID. It's still possible to get COVID-19 after being vaccinated; these breakthrough infections appear to be less severe and do not last as long.

Breakthrough infections happen much less often than infections in unvaccinated people. However, those infected with the Delta variant, including fully vaccinated people with symptomatic breakthrough infections, can still transmit it to others.

COVID-19 vaccines effectively prevent most infections, but like most vaccines, they're not 100% effective.

Booster

Another critical step in slowing the epidemic is booster shots. The Department of Health and Human Services has announced a plan to offer COVID-19 vaccine booster shots this fall. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) advisory panel voted to approve the Pfizer vaccine for those 65 and older, but not a widespread administering of booster shots for those 12 and over.

If the FDA and Indian Health Services approve any booster shots, the Choctaw Nation will offer the Pfizer COVID-19 booster dose. As of press time, there was no action taken by the FDA on the Moderna vaccine.

If you're 65 and older, it's important to get your booster. Captain Clinton Bullock, Director of Pharmacy for the Choctaw Nation, said, "Everyone [those 65 and older] who received the vaccine eight months ago should get the booster dose, as data has shown that the vaccine wanes in effectiveness after eight months. The booster dose will give your immune system the added immune response it needs to gain back the full effectiveness of the vaccine."

For anyone who is immunocompromised, it's recommended to get a third dose of the vaccine. The serum and dosage amount in both the third dose and the booster is the same. The difference lies in who gets it and when. Immunocompromised people can get their third dose 28 days after their second dose so that protection levels can reach acceptable levels.

"Those who are indicated as immunocompromised need the third dose to build enough immunity in their system to fight off the virus. These people naturally don't build a large enough response to vaccines," said Bullock.

Immunocompromised populations include

people who have:

- Been receiving active cancer treatment for tumors or cancers of the blood
- Received an organ transplant and are taking medicine to suppress the immune system
- Received a stem cell transplant within the last two years or are taking medication to suppress the immune system
- Moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency (such as DiGeorge syndrome, Wiskott-Aldrich syndrome)
- Advanced or untreated HIV infection
- Active treatment with high-dose corticosteroids or other drugs that may suppress your immune response

Those who reach acceptable levels of protection after their second dose should receive the booster eight months after their second dose to maintain those protection levels.

"Both reasons for the third shot of vaccine are important, help protect you from severe disease progression, and help [prevent] the community spread of the virus," said Bullock.

It's expected that those who received the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine will be able to get a booster shot in the coming months. In a press release from the CDC, Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the CDC, said, "We also anticipate booster shots will likely be needed for people who received the J&J vaccine. Administration of the J&J vaccine did not begin in the U.S. until March 2021, and we expect more data on J&J in the next few weeks. With those data in hand, we will keep the public informed with a timely plan for J&J booster shots as well."

Treatment

The Nation's commitment to its tribal members doesn't stop at vaccinations. The Choctaw Nation Health Care Center in Talihina, Okla. has begun treating patients infected with COVID-19 with the REGEN-COV infusion therapy. The treatment is approved by the FDA with an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) similar to the three available COVID-19 vaccinations.

REGEN-COV is a monoclonal antibodies treatment that's delivered through a vein. Monoclonal antibodies are laboratory-produced molecules that act as substitute antibodies to restore, enhance, or mimic the immune system's function to attack foreign cells, in this case, the COVID-19 virus. These treatments attack a COVID-19 protein making it more difficult for the virus to attach to and enter human cells.

The REGEN-COV treatment will currently be

available for tribal citizens with a Certified Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) card and Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) associates.

"Being able to give this infusion to our patients is a big step in being able to treat them for COVID-19 before they reach a level in the disease process which would require hospitalization. Working with our CNHSA physicians, patients will be screened to make sure they fit the criteria for the REGEN-COV drug therapy and be quickly scheduled for their infusion," says Jason Hill, D.O., Chief Medical Officer. "We are purposefully starting with a limited patient base to ensure we are optimizing the process to provide the best possible care to our patients. We hope to open the therapy to further segments of the population quickly," explains Todd Hallmark, Executive Officer of Health.

Lynsey Pearce went in for the REGEN-COV treatment at a hospital in Texas two days after losing her sense of taste and smell, a common COVID-19 symptom. Within 24 hours, she began to feel better.

"The day after my symptoms improved, I felt somewhat back to normal. Every day after, it just continued to get better and better until I was back to 100%," said Pearce.

Pearce's husband also contracted COVID-19. She attributes the infusion with keeping things from getting much worse in his case.

"I got to the point where we had two kids at home, one an 18-month-old, one a six-year-old. I was scared that I would have to load them up in the car and drop their dad off at the hospital," said Pearce.

Patients experiencing COVID-19 symptoms but are not on oxygen should speak to their healthcare provider about the infusion to determine if the therapy is an appropriate course of action. Physicians can refer patients with a CDIB card to the Talihina facility by calling 918-567-7000.



**COVID-19 VACCINE
NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

Appointments for vaccines are now available to the public for ages 18 and older at any CNHSA clinic. Patients ages 16 and older can receive the Pfizer vaccine at the Talihina location. Other locations will primarily be giving the Moderna vaccine.

800-349-7026, EXT. 6
USE YOUR MYCNHSA APP, OR VISIT MY.CNHSA.COM

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Fiscal Relief Fund – ARPA Funding

CORRECTION

In last month's issue of the Biskinik, there was an error in the American Rescue Plan Act press release and FAQ.

Below is the correct information concerning the Adult Economic Recovery program. Tribal members 18 and over can receive \$1,000 annually for Internet access, technology and living expenses (mortgage, rent, utilities and food) for two years. The Adult Economic Recovery program provides a total benefit of \$2,000.

We apologize for any confusion this might have caused. For more information, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/covidrelief>.



CHOCTAW NATION AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

APPLICATION WINDOW

**ARPA FRF Food Security
(Elder and Disability):**
Current - June 30, 2022

**ARPA FRF Economic Impact Recovery
(Adult and Dependent):**
Current - June 30, 2022

SERVICE AREA: NATIONAL



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT CHOCTAWNATION.COM/COVIDRELIEF

FAQ: Fiscal Relief Fund (FRF) – American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

Who is eligible?

FRF- ARPA Food Security Program (Elder and Disabled)

- Choctaw tribal members ages 55 and older can receive a card for monthly grocery allowance for the next two years
- Choctaw tribal members ages 18-54 with a disability can receive a card for monthly grocery allowance for the next two years

FRF- ARPA Economic Impact Recovery Program (Adult and Minor)

- Choctaw tribal members newborn – 17 can receive annual funding for internet and technology
- Choctaw tribal members 18 and older for food, internet and technology and living expenses for two years

When can I apply?

Applications are now open

How much is available?

FRF- ARPA Food Security Program (Elder and Disabled)

- Tribal members 55 and older: \$200/monthly grocery allowance for two years. This age may also apply for the Economic Recovery Program- Adults for \$1,000 per year for two years. Total amount is \$6,800 (\$4800 for ARPA Disability Food Security + \$2,000 for Economic Recovery Program- Adult)
- Tribal members 18 – 54 with a disability: \$200/monthly grocery allowance. This group may also apply for the Economic Recovery Program- Adults for \$1,000 per year for two years. Total amount is \$6,800 (\$4800 for ARPA Disability Food Security + \$2,000 for Economic Recovery Program- Adult)

FRF- ARPA Economic Impact Recovery Program (Adult and Minor)

- Tribal members Newborn – 17: \$700 annually for Internet access and technology and student and childcare assistance for two years. The Dependent Economic Recovery program provides a total benefit of \$1,400.
- Tribal members 18 and older: \$1,000 annually for Internet access and technology and for living expenses like mortgage, rent, utilities and food for two years. The Adult Economic Recovery program provides a total benefit of \$2,000

What if I was on the monthly Cares Food Security Program:

If you received the Cares Act Elder or Disability Food Security Program, you will need to apply for the FRF ARPA Food Security Program. After approval, a new card will be issued and mailed to you.

How will we receive the funds?

After your application is approved, you will receive a convenience card with your pre-loaded amount. This will be mailed to your address listed in the Chahta Achvffa portal.

Where can I apply:

Please visit www.choctawnation.com/covidrelief for complete ARPA program details and information about how to apply online through our Chahta Achvffa portal.

ITI FABVSSA

Renewing Choctaw-French relations through an exhibit collaboration

This month, we are continuing a short break from the “A New Chahta Homeland” series to share about an exciting exhibit that the Historic Preservation Department has been working on for several years.

On 18 September 2021, the Versailles Public Library in France opened an exhibit titled “An Inquisitive Prince: The Fate of the Ethnographic Cabinet of the Count of Artois,” the result of several years of collaboration between the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and two French institutions. The exhibit tells the history of a notable French royal collection of items collected from across the world in “curiosity cabinets.” Featured in the last room of the exhibit is a room curated by Choctaw Nation staff to show how the collection’s one-of-a-kind items have been part of our journey in learning more about the arts and lives of our Choctaw ancestors. The exhibit is also one component of a larger project that includes a blog and ongoing knowledge exchange about the items and their conservation. This project has involved the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, the Versailles Public Library, Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation and the Choctaw Cultural Center.

In 2016, Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Research Associate Jennifer Byram reached out to the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac to inquire about possible Choctaw items in their museum collections. This outreach was part of creating the Chahta Imponna Database, a virtual collection of items of Choctaw traditional art, housed in Choctaw Nation museums, the Choctaw Cultural Center, and other institutions around the world. This contact initiated a working relationship between Paz Núñez-Regueiro, who had just taken the position of Head Curator of the Americas of the Musée du quai Branly, and Jennifer Byram that led to an exchange of information and a virtual consultation in February 2018 regarding a number of the museum’s exceptional items from the 1700’s. During that time, Núñez-Regueiro noted the potential for a collaborative exhibit with the Choctaw Nation. Those early conversations created a dialogue that paved the way for this collaboration that harkens to the historic diplomatic relationship between Choctaws and the French.

When Spanish conquistador Hernando de Soto first met Choctaw warriors in 1540, Choctaws proved to be a powerful player in world politics. Following an initial meeting in 1700, Choctaws established a relationship with the French that grew over time. Throughout this era, French explorers brought back items from the Southeast and other parts of North America to elite French collections. While France was a respected ally to a greater degree than their imperial counterparts, the taking of Indigenous nations’ items from their homelands and their placement into European royal collections and museums epitomizes the complicated relationship between Choctaws and France. Acquiring knowledge about Indigenous communities was integral to European empire-making and Choctaws were no exception. This era of rapid imperial expansion also contributed to the development of salvage anthropology which sought to document Indigenous communities before the Euro-American civilizational project assimilated Indigenous peoples and their cultures. Across the globe, European empires collected items and featured them in museums and universities. Indigenous community members and scholars have long critiqued the colonial origins of many collections and

advocated for institutions to collaborate with Indigenous communities (and repatriate items in some cases). U.S. laws like the 1990 Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act have also raised awareness about items in domestic collections and compelled such collaboration. Today, Choctaws are working to reconnect with the Choctaw items living outside of our community to reclaim and revitalize our ancestral knowledge and traditions, connecting us to Choctaw ancestors as far back as 500 generations.

The Choctaw exhibit room features ten North American items from the French collection which were kept at the Versailles Municipal Library following the French Revolution in 1789. The items in the Choctaw room include a pair of bear paw moccasins, a man’s beaded trade cloth legging, a shell gorget and shell bead bracelet, trade bead jewelry, a quiver made of a gar fish hide, darts made of rivercane, and a quillwork and feather headdress. While the provenance of these items is unknown, they have clear associations with the Southeast and fit descriptions of items that Choctaws had during that time period. For instance, the headdress visually matches one worn by a Choctaw chief in a 1732 French painting by Alexandre de Batz and the bearpaw moccasins match a description of Choctaw war parties written by English trader James Adair. Throughout the collaboration, both the Choctaw and French teams have been able to learn more about these items and gained insights into how they were made.

One major objective of our exhibit room was to remind the international audience (who might not know about Choctaws or Native Americans) that we are a thriving, contemporary nation. To accomplish this, Historic Preservation created a new map that shows the geographical journey of Choctaw people on the land since the beginning of time. Alongside each of the exhibit items, we featured photographs of several Choctaw artists and their works alongside the collection items. The artists featured in the exhibit include Ruby Boulding, Colina Hickman, Brad Joe, Michael Rose, Eveline Steele, Les Williston, and the Choctaw Traditional Textile group. Integrated throughout exhibit are images of Choctaw social dancers, the Choctaw homeland, and a group of Choctaw youth visiting the Choctaw village site of Bottle Creek during the 2018 Indigenous Immersion Camp. Lastly, we showcase a short film by Mark Williams that shares how Choctaw Nation staff and community members worked with and learned from the French collection as part of our ongoing cultural revitalization work. This exhibit video includes information on the history of Choctaw and French relations, and reflections on the collection’s significance to our Choctaw community. For project partners, the most significant moment of the exhibit was listening to Choctaw elders’ insights on the production of them items and watching their first reactions to seeing these pieces that hold vast amounts of Choctaw knowledge. We plan to release more videos reflecting on different aspects of the collaboration on the project blog. We aspire to one day bring these items to Oklahoma for more of these encounters across time and space, facilitated by the works of these ancestors.

This project is just one of many that the Choctaw Nation has embarked upon to share the knowledge of our ancestors with the Choctaw community and beyond. As we mentioned at the beginning of this article, this collaboration developed out of the work of creating the Chahta Imponna Database.



Photo provided by Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac

A curator prepares a pair of bear paw moccasins from North America for the exhibit “La Curiosité d’un Prince” opening this month in the Versailles Public Library in Versailles, France.

This database is also part of Hina Hanta (<https://hinahanta.choctawnation.com/>), an online database that shows the items held at the Choctaw Nation Capitol Museum, Wheelock Academy Historic Site and the Choctaw Cultural Center. Staff from these institutions have worked hard to bring attention to these items and make them accessible to our community members, no matter where they live. Lastly, these projects have helped us to create lasting working relationships with institutions across the world to rectify and reconcile harms of the past.

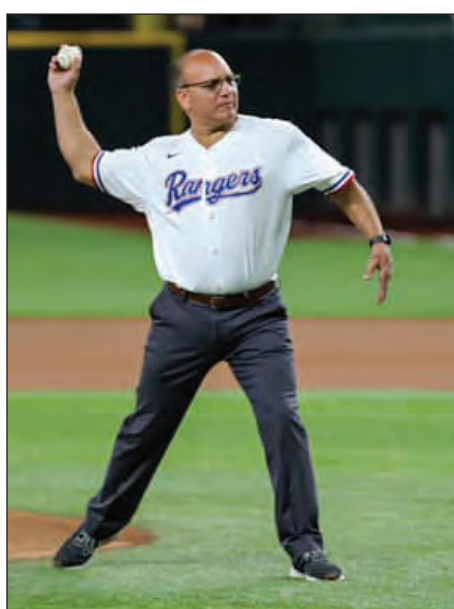
This exhibit collaboration between the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and Musée du quai Branly is a testament to the historic relationship between Choctaws and France as well as the complex relationships between colonialism, museums and contemporary communities. The Indigenous items in the Musée du quai Branly collection have had long, storied lives and served many purposes during their journey from the former “Louisiana” region of the 1700’s to the present. These items embody the relationships between diverse peoples from the eighteenth century and the journeys made across thousands of miles and hundreds of years. They also serve as a bridge for us to better understand those who shared the same world and time as these items and the relationships with the distant nations that took the items to Paris. By reconnecting with Choctaw items, we are also reconnecting with our ancestors who made and used them. Not only have these items helped us reinvoke our nation-to-nation relationship 250 years later but they also illustrate how Choctaws have an enduring sovereignty that we have continually asserted throughout history. These items crucially remind us that Choctaw politics are inherently international and are not solely defined by our relationship with the United States.

Over the course of this collaboration, Choctaw Nation staff have had the opportunity to reflect on the complex history that this royal collection raised. We have found that working together with these French institutions has helped us to establish a new chapter in our history with France, a crucial ally throughout the 1700’s. By collaborating with the Musée du quai Branly on this exhibit, we revisit these histories and its legacies, recreate new relations, and reconnect the items of our ancestors with our community. In doing so, these objects from the past will gain a new life in the present by helping us facilitate these relationships within our community and, through the legacies of our ancestors, with French partners. Addition-

ally, we also highlight ongoing Historic Preservation work within the Choctaw Nation today, as well as the newly opened Choctaw Nation Cultural Center. This collaboration will help us to show to you, our community, that the materials and relationships involved in this exhibit come out of Choctaw histories, traditions, and artistry and how they have brought us to who we are as Choctaw Nation today. Reflecting on the project, Paz Núñez-Regueiro, Head Curator of the Americas Collections at the Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac, writes, “Throughout the exhibit, this collaboration was a wonderful experience and very enriching, a rediscovery of the objects and the role that collections and museums can have. In spite of the remote working conditions imposed by COVID-19, we were able to find a more effective way of collaborating by remaining in dialogue at a distance which gave me the tools to develop future collaborations based on this model. This has without a doubt been one of the most beautiful collaborations of my professional life and I feel that I still have much more to learn from the Choctaw Cultural Center team. It is a very moving feeling to weave the relationship together again following the historic relationship that united Choctaw and French peoples in the 17th and 18th centuries.”

On behalf of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, we are honored to be a part of “An Inquisitive Prince,” a joint project involving the Historic Preservation Department and Choctaw Cultural Center. The Choctaw Nation co-curators of the exhibit are Jennifer Byram (Historic Preservation) and Cady Shaw (Cultural Center). Other members of the Choctaw Nation exhibit team include Sue Folsom (Cultural Services), Stacey Halfmoon (Cultural Center), Dr. Ian Thompson (Historic Preservation), Misty Madbull (Historic Preservation), Megan Baker (Historic Preservation), and Ryan Spring (Historic Preservation). Co-curators in France from the Musée du quai Branly-Jacques Chirac are Paz Núñez-Regueiro, Head Curator of the Americas, and Nikolaus Stolle, Visiting Scholar; and from the Versailles Public Library, Vincent Haeghele, Director; and Hortense Longequeue, Curator. You can learn more about the project, a part of the CROYAN (French Royal Collections from North America) initiative, here: <https://croyan.quaibrantly.fr/en/>

On October 1, the Choctaw and French project teams of the exhibit will host a virtual opening that discusses the work that went into making it a reality. This will be available for viewing at the Choctaw Cultural Center.



Photos by Christian Toews

Chief Gary Batton delivered the First Pitch at Globe Life Field on August 18, representing the Choctaw Nation.

Batton throws first pitch

Rangers announce “Choctaw Stadium”

Chief Gary Batton of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma threw out the first pitch before the Texas Rangers took on the Seattle Mariners on August 18 at Globe Life Field in Arlington, Texas.

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

The multi-purpose sports and entertainment venue, which previously served as the home of the Texas Rangers from 1994-2019, will be called Choctaw Stadium from now on.

This naming rights agreement expands the partnership that the Rangers and Choctaw Casinos & Resorts have had since 2010. In May 2019, the Rangers and Choctaw announced an extension of their partnership that brands Choctaw as the Official and Exclusive Casino and Resort of the Texas Rangers and includes a significant presence at Globe Life Field.



CELEBRATE THE INAUGURAL CHOCTAW FLAG DAY

OCTOBER 15-16, 2021

Submit a photo showing how you honor the Choctaw flag and what it means to you.

Five winners will receive prizes and one grand prize winner will receive commemorative Choctaw Flag Day items and a Choctaw Store gift card!

Purchase your Choctaw flags online at www.choctawstore.com. Join us for a Live Stream event on Facebook.

#choctawflagday #togetherweremore

Choctaw Flag Day was established in 2020 to honor the creation of The Great Seal of the Choctaw Nation on October 16, 1860.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

Fry Bread Express owner Christine Davison wins Chahtapreneur of the Year

By Christian Toews

The Choctaw Nation Small Business Development held its annual award ceremony on August 10, where the 2021 Chahtapreneur award winners were announced. Every year, one Choctaw-owned small business from each district is recognized for work ethic, perseverance, business successes and living out the Chahta Spirit in life and business. In addition, one of those exceptional businesses won the overall Chahtapreneur of the Year award, which is the highest award received at this annual event.

This year's top honor was awarded to Christine Davison, owner of Fry Bread Express, from Calera, Okla. Fry Bread Express is a food truck that offers Indian tacos, charbroiled bison burgers, frybread burgers and more. Davison commented on winning this award, saying, "The award was just amazing. I was shocked. I was so appreciative. We put a lot of hard work into this business, and we are just extremely thankful."

Davison said that she and her husband Scott started the business in July of 2018 to produce delicious food and excellent service. She noted that customers from all over the country stopped to enjoy the food.

"We get a lot of customers from the Dallas area who will make a U-turn just to get some frybread. We also get customers from the airport who find us online and come over. A lot of these customers become loyal customers," she said.

While many businesses struggled or were forced to close during the pandemic, Davison said that Fry Bread Express could stay open. Not only were they simply open, but they were also giving back to the community around them. From providing free meals to kids and partnering with Ministries in Action and Boots on the Ground, to delivering food to Choctaw Elders, Christine and her family continuously live out the Chahta spirit of faith, family, and culture. She said they are continuing to do well.

"We are in our third year as a business, and I believe we have made it over the hump of the first few years, wondering if we are going to make it as a business."

When asked about the future of Fry Bread Express, Davison said they hope to open a brick-and-mortar location so they can do even more business and continue to grow.

Running a business during a pandemic is not the only major challenge Christine and Scott have overcome this year.

While they have done their best to avoid COVID-19, both of them caught a severe case of the virus and ended up in the hospital to receive treatment. Both have recovered, and Christine said they are taking it slow but will be back to full health and operation of their business very soon.

She attributes her recovery to her faith, saying, "It was a whole lot of prayer and just thinking of all the things I needed to do and that I still needed to be here."

If you have never tried Fry Bread Express, Christine encourages you to give them a try.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Christine Davison and her husband, Scott Davison, pose for a photo in the window of their food truck, Fry Bread Express. Christine, the owner of Fry Bread Express in Calera, Oklahoma, recently won the overall Chahtapreneur of the Year award.

"When we do get people who come up and say they have never had Native American food, I say you're missing out. You're at the right spot to try your first Indian taco. Once they do try the food, we typically have a customer for life. So, we just tell them to come give us a try," said Christine.

During the Chahtapreneur Awards, Chief Gary Batton applauded the hard work and determination of small business owners.

"The worldwide pandemic may have hindered small businesses, but all of our Chahtapreneurs rose to the challenge," stated Batton. "I'm so incredibly proud of each one of them and look forward to seeing them continue to create new job opportunities and economic growth throughout southeast Oklahoma."

Award nominations are based on Chahtapreneur business owners' participation with Choctaw Nation Small Business Development Program, community involvement and community impact. This is the fifth year the Choctaw Nation has given the award.

Below is a complete list of the Chahtapreneur Award winners by district:

- District 1: Darla Crutchfield: CJ's Café – Valliant, Okla.
- District 2: Justin Hicks: Power Testing Services LLC Air – Battiest, Okla.
- District 3: Jimmy & Amanda Morris: Ouachita Explorer RV Rentals – Smithville, Okla.
- District 4: Sconyers Family: Poteau Family Fitness – Poteau, Okla.
- District 5: Ron Cole: RMR Pest Services – Stigler, Okla.
- District 6: Joshua & Amber Bull: AJ Butcher Block – Talihina, Okla.
- District 7: Niki Cunningham: Riverbird Lodging – Tuskahoma, Okla.
- District 8: Chance Oakes: Oakes Auto Sales – Hugo, Okla.
- District 9: Christine Davison: Fry Bread Express – Calera, Okla.
- District 10: Codi Conn: Conn's Seamless Gutters – Caddo, Okla.
- District 11: Grayson Smedley: Precision Landscapes – McAlester, Okla.
- District 12: LaDonna Jones: Jones Concessions – Crowder, Okla.

For more information on Choctaw Small Business Development, visit <https://choctawsmallbusiness.com>.



Photo by Angela Summer Artistry

From left to right: Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr.; Chief Gary Batton; Christine and Scott Davison and Tammie Gwin, Senior Executive Officer of Strategic Development.

Choctaw Tribal Council approves FY 2022 budget

TVSHKA HOMMA, Okla. (Aug. 27, 2021) – The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council unanimously approved a \$1.88 billion comprehensive expense budget for fiscal year 2022 during a special Tribal Council session on August 26. The new fiscal year begins on October 1, 2021.

"I would like to thank the Tribal Council for passing this year's budget which supports 144 different programs for our tribal members and continues the growth of the Nation," states Chief Gary Batton. "The Choctaw Nation continues to provide employment opportunities, grow education, health and housing services to tribal members and take on increased governmental responsibilities on our reservation after the McGirt decision. We are proud to have proposed a positive cash flow budget that highlights our Nation's financial stability."

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is continuing its commitment to tribal members to add new programs and services, focused on culture, education, housing and health to its increasing population. This year, tribal members increased by 6,228 in 2021 to a total of 205,842.

The Nation also plans to build 240 new homes next year to bring us closer to our strategic goal of providing 1,000 homes to members.

The Choctaw Nation is also planning to add an additional 879 new jobs in fiscal year 2022 increasing total associates to 12,416.

The McGirt Supreme Court decision has impacted our judicial system which is experiencing a 600% increase in caseload; and this has increased the need for public safety, legal, children and family services.



CHOCTAW NATION APPROVES FISCAL YEAR 2022 BUDGET

VISIT [CHOCTAWNATION.COM](https://choctawnation.com) FOR HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT TRIBAL MEMBERS CAN EXPECT TO SEE FOR THE NEXT YEAR.

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October 2021

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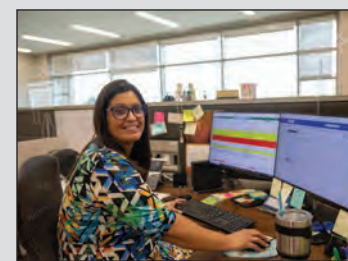
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Biskinik Mission Statement:
To serve as the source of information for Choctaw Nation tribal members by delivering community news through a variety of communication channels.

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