



October 2023 Issue



Chief Gary Batton delivers virtual 2023 State of the Nation Address

By Kellie Matherly

On September 4, 2023, Chief Gary Batton of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) delivered his State of the Nation Address virtually.

This year, Chief Batton gave updates on several important initiatives like the Choctaw Landing construction project in Hochatown and shared program highlights, including Youth Outreach, NAGPRA, the Wildland Fire Module and more. The video also told the story of Ridge Bond, a Choctaw tribal member who influenced the adoption of the state song, and Kelbie Kennedy, the first ever National Tribal Affairs Advocate for FEMA.

The address began with an excerpt from Chief George Harkins' "Letter to the American People." Written in 1832 while facing removal from their homelands in modern-day Mississippi, the letter is often seen as a symbol of strength, solidarity and resilience among the Choctaw people.

"...my destiny is cast among the Choctaw people. If they suffer, so will I; if they prosper, then I will rejoice. Let me again ask you to regard us with feelings of kindness."

Chief Batton noted that although the letter was written nearly 200 years ago, it is still relevant to the Choctaw Nation today.

One of the most crucial services CNO offers is housing. Not only does the Housing Authority oversee the construction of homes for tribal members, but it also governs a variety of programs that assist tribal members with repairs, air conditioning, storm shelters and more.

Batton referenced the rising cost of rent in the area and the shortage of market-rate housing.

"To combat this issue, we have begun work on three new apartment complexes that will be completed in 2024. In total, these multi-family complexes will provide over 400 units, and our tribal members and Choctaw Nation associates will be able to pre-lease apartments."

In addition to these multi-family units, 98 homes have been built across the reservation over the past year, bringing the Tribe closer to its goal of 600 units for the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

Another of CNO's most comprehensive services is ensuring quality healthcare for Native Americans. Chief Batton praised the implementation of support services, particularly those addressing diabetes, which disproportionately affects people in Indigenous communities.

On the whole, Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority had over 800,000 health encounters as of June 30, 2023.

Elder care was an important topic in this year's address as well. Chief Batton pointed to two important programs designed to keep elders healthy and active as they age.

"We also extended the Elder and Disability Food Security programs for a year to give our tribal members access to healthy food. Another way we support our elders is through the Healthy Aging program, where case managers work to improve the quality

of life for seniors through wellness programs, social services and behavioral health resources."

From healthcare, Batton moved on to address culture and sovereignty, particularly through language initiatives and CNO's Peacemaker Court.

"One way we promote and preserve Choctaw culture is through our language revitalization programs. When we first began teaching the Choctaw language in 1998, we had one class by satellite at the University of Oklahoma, and now we teach thousands of people every week."

According to the Chahta Anumpa Aikkhvna, CNO's language school, more than 3,000 people participate in classes each week.

The Language Department also began an apprenticeship program, offering tribal members the opportunity to learn the Choctaw language and help teach it to others. According to Chief Batton, "It's not only important to our sovereignty, but it's also a huge part of who we are as a strong tribal nation."

Since the Choctaw Nation adopted the Peacemaking Act in 2015, tribal members have had a forum to resolve disputes with the help of tribal elders.

Chief Batton said, "Using traditional Choctaw practices, ceremonies and cultural beliefs sets our Peacemaker Court apart from the typical judicial process and allows us to exercise our sovereignty in a truly unique way. Oftentimes, tribal elders help settle disputes through traditional practices that help heal those involved and repair relationships moving forward."

Another way the Tribe has exercised its sovereignty is through the establishment of the Office of Wildlife Conservation, which helps maintain the balance between wildlife and mankind through responsible practices.

Batton also pointed out that CNO has put tribal codes in place to protect tribal members' rights to hunt and fish on the reservation.

Finally, Chief Batton addressed challenges with Oklahoma's governor, Kevin Stitt, and lauded efforts by the Oklahoma House and Senate to maintain partnerships with the tribes, despite the governor's opposition.

"The Choctaw Nation is a good friend and partner to the State of Oklahoma. Each year, we impact the state's economy by more than two billion dollars through compacts, which help create jobs, infrastructure projects and law enforcement services. We believe in collaborating with legislators to do what's best for all Oklahomans, and I want to take a moment to thank those in the Oklahoma House and Senate for recognizing our ongoing partnerships by continuing to work with us toward our common goals."

In his closing statement, Batton said, "Our story is nowhere near finished. In fact, it has just begun. We rely on the past for wisdom, the present for action, and the future for hope. Yesterday, today and always, we are the Chahta people. Yakoke, and God Bless."

Visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/news/videos/state-of-the-nation-2023/> to view the 2023 State of the Nation in its entirety.



Special Labor Day Issue

This month's issue of the Biskinik is filled with highlights from this year's Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival.



Photo by Christian Toews

Jacaius Willis goes down the slide at the carnival.



Photo by Krislan Garside

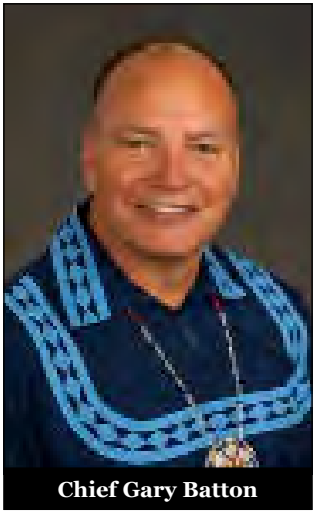
The Jones family pose for a photo at their campsite.



Photo by Rodolphe Foucher

The newly crowned 2023-2024 Choctaw Royalty perform the Lord's Prayer in front of the Choctaw Capital Building.

Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

This is why tribal sovereignty matters

Imagine the U.S. government took your home, but promised to give you other land and protections in exchange. Now, imagine someone came along years later and told you those agreements don't count anymore, because it encroaches on power they want for themselves.

In short, that's what Oklahoma's 39 tribes are talking about when we focus on the idea of tribal sovereignty. We are defending our right to what the U.S. government promised. Unfortunately, some people and groups act as if sovereignty is not real, especially when it is inconvenient for them.

However, tribal sovereignty is a matter of rock-solid law, not opinion.

Many of the agreements go back to well before Oklahoma became a state. In fact, the Choctaw Nation has treaties with Great Britain and France dating back as far as 1786.

However, our most significant agreement is 1830's Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek. In exchange for leaving Mississippi, our people agreed to take land in what was then called Indian Territory, along with a promise we would always be treated as a sovereign nation.

After that, we drafted our first Constitution in 1838, almost 70 years before Oklahoma became a state. The most recent and current constitution was signed in 1983.

Yes, the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek was signed a long time ago. But nothing—including Oklahoma's admission into the union—changes the terms. The Choctaw Nation still maintains its rights, which are guaranteed by Congress and the law.

The Choctaw people are also proud to be Oklahomans. Our love for the state is not diminished by retaining our sovereignty. We have signed many treaties, compacts and other agreements with the state, counties, cities and law enforcement agencies. Why? To improve life for all Oklahomans.

Those agreements don't lessen our sovereignty. Indeed, they demonstrate we have the authority and the right to make our own deals. That power is not subject to the whims of whomever happens to be Oklahoma's governor. Or, for that matter, who is in charge at the federal level.

No government can succeed if people don't believe its promises. To maintain respect with all people—not just Native Americans—Oklahoma and the United States must honor the agreements they made with Native tribes.

This is the heart of sovereignty.



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

Consequences of Sin

The first and second chapters of Genesis show God speaking the world into existence.

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Genesis 2:7.

In the creation accounts, the Bible depicts a world brimming with abundant forms of life that are interdependent and mutually enriching. God's response to his creation was the word “good.”

When he created human beings, he instructed them to cultivate and draw out the vast resources of creation. The Hebrew word for this perfect and harmonious part of creation is “shalom.”

Shalom means absolute wholeness, full, harmonious, joyful, flourishing life.

In Genesis 2:16 and 17 it reads, “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

However, man disobeyed and ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Shalom was devastated by this act of disobedience. The entire created world became broken.

Human beings are integral to the fabric of things, so when humans turned from God, the entire world unraveled. This is the death that God had said would occur if man disobeyed. God's shalom was lost—physically, spiritually, socially, psychologically, and culturally. The result of this sin is oppression, war, crime, and violence. Also, disease, genetic disorders, famine, natural disasters, aging and death are the result.

In the book of Romans Chapter 8, the Bible tells us that the entire world is now in bondage to decay. The whole world is subject to futility because of this act of disobedience. Man is a fallen race living in a fallen world. Man gropes in darkness to try to find a solution to his problems. He creates religions of his own from the very world that is broken.

The solution is for man to reconcile with God by repentance and accepting Christ as savior.

Chahta Foundation awards eight OSUIT students with vocational scholarship

OKMULGEE, Okla. (September 15, 2023) - A scholarship ceremony was recently held on the OSUIT campus for eight Choctaw tribal students after being selected to receive a Marathon Petroleum Vocational Scholarship from the Chahta Foundation worth \$10,000.

The Marathon Petroleum Vocational Scholarship Program was established in 2023 and is the result of donations given to the Chahta Foundation by Marathon Petroleum.

This competitive scholarship supports Choctaw students enrolling in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technology, Construction Technology-Electrical Construction or Construction Management, Engineering Technologies, Electrical Technologies, or Pipeline Integrity Technology at OSUIT's School of Engineering and Construction Technologies.

Dr. Ina Agnew, vice president of Student Services, sent appreciation to the Choctaw Nation and praised them for understanding just how vital OSUIT is to workforce development.

“OSUIT is proud and honored to have its students selected as recipients for the Marathon Petroleum Scholarship offered through the Choctaw Nation and its Chahta Foundation,” said Agnew. “These partners recognize the importance of investing in its youth to build a talented workforce for the energy industry. Such support increases access to a college education that leads to a high-paying career in a high-demand industry leading to financial security and stability for our students and their families.”

Recipients will receive \$1,500 each trimester during their two-year program. Students will intern for Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma or another approved business during their program's final year and will receive an additional \$1,000 during their internship.

The eight students selected to receive 2023 Marathon Petroleum Vocational scholarships are:

- Chet Jackson, McAlester, Okla. - Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Technology
- Zane Hendrix, Cameron, Okla. - Electrical/Electronic Technologies
- Jakob Dunlap, Alderson, Okla. - Construction Technology - Electrical Construction
- Brian Williams, Wright City, Okla. - Construction Technology - Electrical Construction
- Taylor Mobbs, Atoka, Okla. - Construction Technology - Electrical Construction
- Hunter Welker, Spiro, Okla. - Electrical/Electronic Technologies
- Cooper Graham, Valiant, Okla. - Electrical/Electronic Technologies



Photo by Mekayla McClure

Pictured from left to right: Marathon Petroleum ESG & Stakeholder VJ Smith, Hunter Welker, Brian Williams, Cooper Graham, Taylor Mobbs, Marathon Petroleum Region Manager Ian Leybas and Jake Dunlap.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Family Justice Center offers hope and healing for families

On Aug. 25, Chief Batton and I had the honor of participating in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the grand opening of the Ahni Center at the Chief Gregory E. Pyle Tribal Complex in Durant. The center is the first tribal Family Justice Center of its kind in Oklahoma's Indian Country. “Ahni” translates to “hope” in the Choctaw language.

The Ahni Center will address the physical and emotional needs of victims of child abuse, domestic violence, and sexual assault and have services available to begin the healing process. When fully operational, the Ahni Center will provide for forensic interviews, Sexual Assault Nursing Exams for adults and children, and therapy for child and adult victims. In addition, the Ahni Center will give referrals for victim services, assistance with victim services applications, victim advocacy, and

court preparation.

Chief Batton's Oct. 2 video blog announces the opening of the Family Justice Center and what it means for the Choctaw Nation. The center is another way that the Choctaw Nation is highlighting its focus on helping curb domestic violence across the reservation. There are also several domestic violence programs available to tribal members. Domestic violence programs offered by the Choctaw Nation include: Project EMPOWER, Victim Assistance Formula Grant, Project SERV, Project HOUSE, Essential Life Skills, and Tribal Set-a-Side. For more information check out choctawnation.com and get help for you and your family.

The Choctaw Nation will be shining a spotlight on Domestic Violence Awareness Month with planned events. These events include:

- Flowers on the Pond Vigil at 10 a.m. on Oct. 5 at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters in Durant, Oklahoma.
- Shine the Light on Domestic Violence at 7 p.m. on Oct. 7 at the Hugo Wellness Center Pond. The event will feature a glow run/walk and candlelight vigil. The night event will be hosted by Choctaw Nation Family Violence Prevention Department and Choctaw Nation Wellness Center.

According to the most recent study from the National Institute of Justice: American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) women are at a significantly higher risk for domestic violence than others. More than 4 in 5 AI/AN women (84.3 percent) have experienced violence in their lifetime. More than half of AI/AN women (56.1 percent) have experienced sexual violence in their lifetime, and more than half (55.5 percent) have experienced physical violence by intimate partners in their lifetime.

The National Domestic Violence Hotline offers these suggestions to victims of domestic violence:

- Tell others you trust, such as friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers, what is happening and talk about ways they might be able to help.
- Memorize emergency numbers for the local police, support persons and crisis hotlines. For example, the National Domestic Violence Hotline number is 1-800-799-SAFE (7233).
- Identify escape routes and places to go if you need to flee from an unsafe situation quickly.
- Talk with your children and/or other household members about what they should do if a violent incident occurs or if they are afraid.
- Put together an emergency bag with money/checkbooks, extra car keys, medicine, and important papers such as birth certificates, social security cards, immigration documents, and medical cards. Keep it somewhere safe and accessible, such as with a trusted friend or at your place of work.
- Trust your instincts—if you think you are in immediate danger, you probably are. If you are afraid for your safety and want the police to come to where you are now, call 911.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, please contact the Choctaw Nation by calling 1-800-522-6170 or by going to choctawnation.com to find a help center and come up with a plan.

Or call the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-800-799-SAFE (7233). There is also a phone line for deaf, speech-impaired, or hard-of-hearing victims at 1-800-787-3224 for talk to text. There is also a secure online chat: thehotline.org or text “loveis” to 22522 to develop a detailed, safety plan that is specific to your unique situation.

Yakoke and God Bless!

PREPARATION OF THE CHUKKA FOR THE WINTER
LUKCHUK KE PILA!
NOV 18, 2023 | 1:00PM-4:00PM
CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

LOVE ISN'T VIOLENT.
10TH ANNUAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS WALK
This event will take place at the Choctaw Wellness Center Walking Trail in Hugo, OK on October 26 at 1:00 pm.
Choctaw Nation Outreach Services Victim Services

UPDATE REQUIRED FOR THOSE WITH SOONERCARE COVERAGE
The Oklahoma Healthcare Authority is now requiring all SoonerCare recipients to update their information to continue coverage.
Contact a Patient Benefit Coordinator at your local Choctaw Nation Health Clinic to update your information and avoid termination or lapse in coverage.
Choctaw Nation Health Services

Basketball



Photo by Christian Chaney

Mini Ballers, First Place: Marris from Shawnee, Oklahoma.



Photo by Christian Chaney

15-18 Teen Co-ed, First Place: MBCI from Philadelphia, Mississippi.



Photo by Christian Chaney

Men's Old Timers, First Place: R5 from Durant, Oklahoma.



Photo by Christian Chaney

12-14 Teen Co-ed, First Place: Baller Elite from Wright City, Oklahoma.



Photo by Christian Chaney

Men's Young Guns, First Place: The Buckets from Rattan, Oklahoma.



Photo by Christian Chaney

Women's All Stars, First Place: Has Beens from Allen, Oklahoma.

Softball



Photo by Krislan Garside

Women's Softball, First Place: Pokko Nafkv.



Photo by Krislan Garside

Men's Softball, First Place: Tribal Brothers.



Photo by Mallory Jackson

A passion for sports runs deep in the Choctaw Nation. Families and teams have been participating in the softball tournament for decades.



Photo by Krislan Garside

Lawrence Battiest, pictured with his family is retiring from the game of softball. Battiest has been playing for 33 years.



Photos by Krislan Garside

Mike Frazier was honored with a jacket for his long softball career during the Labor Day Softball Tournament. Frazier is 75 years old and has been pitching here every Labor Day since 1975.



Photo Courtesy of Chief Batton

Spectators enjoy a game of softball on Saturday, September 2.

Labor Day 5k



Photo by Chris Jennings

Overall Male winner Kyle Karr of McAlester, Oklahoma finished with a time of 19:37.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Overall female winner, Summer Grubbs of Gladewater, Texas finished with a time of 25:12.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Tyson Branyan runs the 2023 5k at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day festival in a ribbon shirt. Branyan would go on to finish second in the 70-74 age group with a time of 31:37.



Photo by Christian Toews

On your mark. Get set. Go! 5K runners take off from the finish line during the annual Labor Day Festival 5K Race.



Photo by Christian Toews

Jayla King enjoys the cooler morning weather while running the 5K Race.



Photo by Christian Toews

Sara Saries, left, and Emily Hooser were all smiles during the 5K race.

Volleyball



Photo by Kellie Matherly

Co-ed Volleyball, First Place: Mississippi Natives.



Photo by Mallory Jackson

Players go for the ball during the Labor Day Volleyball Tournament.

BUSINESS

CHAHTAPRENEUR

CHIT ♦ CHAT


Check Out the Different Types of Business Financing Options!

By Gary Johnson

There are several ways to finance your business depending on whether you are a startup or looking to grow your business to the next level. It is important to be aware of the different types of funding options and how they might affect your business.

Here are some options:

- Bank Loans
- Crowdfunding
- Venture Capital
- Angel Funding
- Friends & Family
- Personal Funds
- Line of Credit
- Business Credit Cards
- SBA Loans




Check out the QR Code for more information.

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Choctaw Nation Small Business Development

APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR THE

SANITATION FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM



Scan to learn more about the program.

Choctaw Nation Office of Environmental Health

AUTUMN IS IN THE AIR!

CELEBRATE THE SEASON OF CHANGE!

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION



CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER



Eddie Bohanan

District 3

Halito!

If for one am welcoming the cooler temperatures that we've recently been experiencing. We were certainly blessed with the slightly cooler than 100 degrees temperatures during the Labor Day Festival. Our 2023 Festival had a generous attendance. With all the sports, arts and crafts, activities, entertainment and carnival, there was certainly something there for every one of every age.

Business was also conducted during the Labor Day weekend. The Choctaw Princess Pageant was held Friday evening. Congratulations to the Princesses, Senior Miss Aliyah Myers, Dist. 7, Junior Miss Cassidy Lee, Dist. 9, and Little Miss Sophia McFarland.

In other business, the newly elected/re-elected councilmen and the Chief and Assistant Chief were sworn in to serve the Choctaw Nation for the next four years. Let me take this opportunity to again thank my voters for giving me the opportunity to serve. Yakoke. We have a lot to look forward to.

One of many things we are looking forward to is the opening of the Three Rivers Meat Company, expected to be before the end of October. The Three Rivers Meat Company held job fairs with onsite interviews at both the Smithville and the Talihina Community Centers with a very good turnout of applicants. It is exciting to see new jobs offered locally. Applications are available on-line at www.threeriversmeatcompany.com.

Black bear season is open throughout the month of October. In conjunction with the Oklahoma Wildlife Conservation Department, Choctaw Nation hosted several bear conservation/hunting workshops. While educating about how hunting and conservation work hand in hand, these workshops are designed to educate the hunters of what is expected of them. For more information contact the CNO Wildlife Conservation Department at wildlife@choctawnation.com.

At the Talihina community center, the potluck "Choctaw Social" is back and held on the first Thursday of the month at 5:30. The purpose of this social is to rejuvenate and promote the use of the Choctaw language in everyday life. This is an interactive class that will teach conversational Choctaw language, Choctaw hymns and reading Choctaw. Everyone is welcome, bring a dish and come learn with us.

The senior citizens of the Smithville and Talihina community centers always have something on their calendars. Besides the meals served, they plan chair volleyball games, trips, and many activities to keep their seniors interested, active and engaged within the community. If you are a senior, come join us. For District 3 news, follow me on FaceBook at Eddie Bohanan Choctaw Tribal Council District 3.

Choctaw Nation Chief and Tribal Council Members sworn in to new term at annual Labor Day Festival

TVSHKA HOMMA, Okla.(September 4, 2023) - The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma held another successful Labor Day festival where Chief Gary Batton was sworn in for his third consecutive term on Sept. 1 at the historical capitol grounds in Tvshka Homma.

The ceremonies also included the swearing-in of six tribal council members starting new terms of office on Sept. 1: District 1, Thomas Williston; District 2, Tony Ward; District 3, Eddie Bohanan; District 5, Ron Perry; District 8, Perry Thompson, and District 11, Robert Karr.

Chief Gary Batton delivered his State of the Nation Address virtually, highlighting tribal initiatives, economic impact, programs and services, and Choctaw success stories.

"The Choctaw Nation is a good friend and partner to the State of Oklahoma," stated Chief Gary Batton. "Each year we impact the state's economy by more than two billion dollars through compacts, which help create jobs, infrastructure



Photo by Mekayla McClure

Choctaw Chief Gary Batton is sworn into his third consecutive term on September 1, 2023.

projects and law enforcement services."

The address capped the three-day-long festival attended by thousands of tribal members and visitors from Oklahoma and neighboring states celebrating faith, family and culture.

View Chief Gary Batton's State of the Nation address (below) and learn more about tribal initiatives, programs and services.



Jess Henry

District 4

As summer transitions into autumn, cooler temperatures, and the leaves begin to change, there's a sense of excitement in District 4. As we step into the new school year, it is important to acknowledge the dedicated teachers and eager students who are the backbone of our community's future. We wish them all a fantastic school year filled with growth, learning, and success.

In August, the district had the privilege of hosting Chief Batton for a senior luncheon. At the luncheon, he shared valuable insights into the progress of District 4. As the Choctaw Nation continues to be the top employer in our district, coupled with the ongoing construction of new housing and the eagerly anticipated 2025 launch of a community center in Poteau, our community's future is brighter than ever. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Chief Batton for his leadership and support, which undoubtedly contribute to the positive atmosphere of our district.

The Freshman Year Initiative Banquet at Carl Albert State College in Poteau was a success, welcoming 34 freshmen to the program. It's the perfect introduction to the supportive community that awaits these new students. With a dedicated team at Carl Albert State College ready to offer both personal and academic assistance, we are confident that these students will thrive in their educational journey. We applaud the Choctaw Nation's commitment to investing in the future of our youth.

Our seniors demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship by winning the Senior Chair Volleyball Championship Trophy at the Labor Day Festival for the third consecutive year. Their dedication and community spirit bring pride and joy to District 4.

The senior community in Poteau continues to thrive with a variety of activities. A special yakoke goes to Debbie and Kenzie, who visited from the Cultural Center to teach seniors the art of making corn husk dolls. Their dedication to preserving traditional craftsmanship is commendable and eagerly anticipated by the seniors for more classes. A recent trip to the Museum of Native American History in Bentonville, Arkansas, enriched their cultural knowledge. Additionally, on the first Friday of every month, the Dale Cox Community Center in Poteau hosts a taco sale, offering a delicious taco and a drink for \$7. The proceeds from this event support the senior activities and we express our gratitude to all those who have contributed.

Spiro seniors enjoyed a night of entertainment and fellowship with the singers "2 Country 4 Nashville." They also embarked on a journey to explore the Spiro Mounds and the Marshall's Museum in Fort Smith in August. As we transition into fall, they are planning more exciting day trips to continue their explorations.

District 4 continues to thrive, with a rich blend of cultural preservation, sportsmanship, community support, and a bright academic future. It's a testament to the vibrant spirit and unity of its residents, making District 4 a special place to call home.

As we celebrate the achievements of District 4, I want to take a moment to express my deep appreciation for the opportunity to serve as your councilman. It's an honor to be a part of this thriving community and to witness the dedication, resilience, and unity that define our district. As we cherish our culture and accomplishments, please know that my door is always open. If there's anything I can do to assist you or address any concerns you may have, please do not hesitate to contact me. Together, we can continue to make District 4 an even better place to live, learn, and grow. Thank you for your trust and support.



District 4 seniors show off their corn husk dolls.



Students pose for a photo during the Freshman Year Initiative at Carl Albert State College.



District 4 seniors won the Senior Chair Volleyball Championship Trophy at the Labor Day Festival for the third consecutive year.



Chief Gary Batton visits with District 4 Seniors during their August luncheon.



Photo by Mekayla McClure

District 1, Thomas Williston; District 2, Tony Ward; District 3, Eddie Bohanan; District 5, Ron Perry; District 8, Perry Thompson, and District 11, Robert Karr are sworn into office on September 1, 2023.

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(GROUNDS CLOSE AT 5:00 PM)

Choctaw Nation Wheelock Academy

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THANKSGIVING DINNERS

November 1, 2023

Battiest Elder Lunch
11:30 AM at the Battiest Community Center

Coalgate Community Lunch
12:00 PM at the Coalgate Community Center

November 2, 2023

Tuskahoma Community Dinner
6:00 PM at the Tuskahoma Cafeteria

November 7, 2023

Battiest Community Dinner
6:00 PM at the Battiest Community Center

Durant Community Dinner
6:00 PM at the Choctaw Event Center in Durant

November 8, 2023

Antlers Community Lunch
12:00 PM at the Antlers Community Center

Atoka Community Lunch
11:00 AM at the Atoka Community Center

Broken Bow Elder Lunch
11:30 AM at the Broken Bow Community Center

Crowder Elder Lunch
11:30 AM at the Crowder Community Center

Hugo Community Lunch
11:30 AM at the Hugo Community Center

Idabel Community Dinner
6:00 PM at the Idabel Community Center

Smithville Community Lunch
12:00 PM at the Smithville Community Center

Stigler Community Lunch
11:30 AM at the Stigler Community Center

Wilburton Community Lunch
11:00 AM at the Wilburton Community Center

November 12, 2023

Crowder Community Lunch
1:00 PM at the Crowder Community Center

November 14, 2023

Broken Bow Community Dinner
6:00 PM at the Broken Bow Community Center

November 15, 2023

McAlester Elder Lunch
11:00 AM at the McAlester Community Center

Poteau Elder Lunch
12:00 PM at the Poteau Community Center

Spiro Community Lunch
11:30 AM at the Spiro Community Center

Wright City Community Lunch
11:30 AM at the Wright City Community Center

November 16, 2023

McAlester Community Dinner
5:30 PM at the McAlester Community Center

Talihina Community Lunch
11:00 AM at the Talihina Community Center

Times and dates are subject to change. Contact your local Choctaw Community Center for more information.

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*

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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 & EVENTS

Jones Academy Reunion

Event Date and Time: October 21 at 10 a.m.
Event Location: Jones Academy Gymnasium
909 Jones Academy Road
Hartshorne, OK 74547
For more information, contact Jennifer Woods at jwoods@choctawnation.com

7th Annual Tulsa Native American Day

The Greater Tulsa Area Indian Affairs Commission would like to announce the annual Native American Day celebration to be held at Dream Keepers Park, 1875 S. Boulder, Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 9, 2023.

The event titled, Weaving a Legacy, is scheduled from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Shuttle busses will be stationed at Boston Avenue United Methodist Church, providing safe passage to the park.

The parade will be highlighted with Sterling Harjo acting as Parade Marshall. Harjo is noted for his writing, directing, and producing, as in the recent hit series, Reservation Dogs. Other noteworthy attendees will be Chief Hill, Muskogee Creek tribe, Chief Standingbear, Osage Tribe, Chief Hoskin, Jr. Cherokee Tribe, and many more.

Other highlights of the day include Cherokee Choir singers, Pawnee Singers and dancers. A showing of Killers of Flower Moon Trailer with questions and answer time with Chief Standingbear, who attended the Cannes film festival showing of the movie. Cultural dancing will be demonstrated by the Chickasaw Dance Troupe. Time will also be allowed for general attendee's to cultural dance. Dana Tiger, a Muskogee artist of Seminole and Cherokee descent, designed the 2023 Native American Day artwork, as seen on T-shirts, posters, & postcards. Ms. Tiger was inducted into the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame in 2021.

To round out the day The Greater Tulsa Indian Affairs Commission will present the winners of the 25th annual Dream-keeper awards. The recipients of the awards represent Native Americans who have dedicated their time and efforts to honor Native American Heritage & Culture.

For more information, visit the Tulsa Native American Day Facebook Page.

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION AGENDA September 8, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER
 2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
 3. ROLL CALL
 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a. Regular Session August 12, 2023
 5. WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
 - a. Veteran of the Month, District #12 – Wilson Roberts
 - b. First Language Speaker of the Month, District #12 – Wilson Roberts
 6. PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - a. Nellie Meashintubby – Individual Speaker – Transparency
 7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES/SEO ANNUAL REPORTS
 8. ELECTION OF SPEAKER, SECRETARY, AND CHAPLAIN OF TRIBAL COUNCIL
 9. APPOINTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARIAN, SERGEANT-AT-ARMS, AND RECORDING SECRETARY OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL
 10. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Letter of Reappointment for Jack Austin as Assistant Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
 - b. Letter of Reappointment for Michael Burrage as General Counsel of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
 - c. Approve Application to Bureau of Indian Affairs for Funding for Preliminary Engineering for Bridge Replacement
 - d. Approve Application for Head Start One-Time Funds
 - e. Approve to Dispose of Surplus Capital Assets – Equipment
 - f. Approve to Dispose of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles
 - g. Approve the FY/2024 Annual Tribal Budget of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
 - h. Amend the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Fish, Game, and Animals Code
 11. OTHER NEW BUSINESS
 12. OLD BUSINESS
 13. ADJOURNMENT
 14. CLOSING PRAYER
- All council bills passed unanimously

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association & Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund

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

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

Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association Loan
To Be Eligible to Apply:

- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from a federally recognized tribe

Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund
To Be Eligible to Apply:

- Must live within the 10.5 counties of the Choctaw Nation
- Must possess a CDIB card from the Choctaw Nation

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

Spiro Community Center
October 27, 2023
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.



Roman Gabriel Anna

Roman Gabriel Anna, 34, passed away August 2, 2023. Roman was born Sept. 3, 1988, in Ada, Okla., to Clayton Wilson Anna and Rita Kay Anna.

He was preceded in death by his brother Justin Miko Anna; and grandparents Hampton and Francis Williams, and Solomon Anna Sr. and Sarah Lewis.

Roman is survived by daughter Channa Anna; his parents; sisters Marinda Taylor and spouse Damon, and ShyAnn Anna; nephews J.C. Anna, Aadin Taylor, and Gage Taylor; niece Mikaela Willis; several aunts, uncles, cousins, and a host of other relatives and friends.

For the full obituary, please visit Bowser Family Funeral Home.



Bobby Jewel Byington

Bobby Jewel Byington, 81, passed away Aug. 12, 2023. Bobby was born April 8, 1942, in Goodwater, Okla., to Eva Mae Byington.

He was preceded in death by his mother; grandparents Thomas and Sophie Byington; brothers Jonah Ward and David Ward; grandson Brandon Joseph Byington.

Bobby is survived by his wife Betty; son Bob Byington and spouse Maureen; daughters Michelle Byington Bailey, and Crystal Dawn Waldorf and spouse Eric; grandchildren Hannah Waldorf, Braden Waldorf, Abigail Waldorf, Gavin Waldorf, Ganon Waldorf, and Patrick Bailey; and sister Shirley Lambert and spouse Bill.

For the full obituary, please visit aCremation.



Dolores Juanita Barrow

Dolores Juanita Barrow, 96, passed away Aug. 9, 2023.

Dolores was born June 12, 1927, in Talihina, Okla.

She is survived by son Skip Ramella; daughters Colette Copeland and Dede Ramella; grandchildren Stacy and Justin Copeland; and great-grandchild Gage Copeland.

For the obituary, please visit Dignity Memorial.



Etombe William James

Etombe "Tom" William James, 84, passed away July 28, 2023.

Tom was born Aug. 24, 1938, in Cade, Okla., to Richard and Mattie (Moffatt) James.

He was preceded in death by his parents; daughter Lisa Kay James Weakley; brothers Hiawatha James, Quannah James, and Quilby James; and sisters Lahoma James and Nocona Brinkley.

Tom is survived by his wife Charlotte James; daughter Tommie James; son Richard Scott James and spouse Allison; grandchildren Mattie Tonubbee and spouse Zach, David James, Abby James, Austin James, Matthew James and Tia Jefferson and spouse Leland; great-grandsons Miles Tonubbee and Jack Tonubbee; brother Benny James; and sister Mickie Duncan.

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



James Curtis Bramblet

James Curtis Bramblet, 78, passed away Sept. 5, 2023.

James was born Sept. 2, 1945, to Curtis Henwood Bramblet and Daisy Jeanette (Hastings) Bramblet.

He was preceded in death by his parents; and sister Janet Carolyn (Bramblet) Foss.

James is survived by his nieces and nephews. For the full obituary, please visit Holmes-Coffey-Murray Funeral Home.



James Michael Cox

James Michael Cox, 87, passed away July 11, 2023.

James was born in 1936. He was preceded in death by his wife, Helen.

James is survived by his children Joe, Denise, and Michael; three grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

For the full obituary, please visit all Veterans Funeral & Cremation.



Chahta Feast of the Dead

The Feast of the Dead is a time of celebration for families and the community to give remembrance to those who have passed on. Join us in this traditional Choctaw burial custom to honor and remember our loved ones.

Thursday
November 2, 2023 | 5 p.m. - 9 p.m.
Choctaw KOA
3650 Enterprise Dr,
Durant, OK 74701

Potluck Style Meal: 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.
(Bring a dish to share)

Family Heritage Crafts: 6:30 p.m.-7:30p.m.
(Bring family photos to scan and copy)

Memorial Reflection & Ceremony: 7:30p.m. -9p.m.
(Share stories about loved ones)

ITI FABVSSA

George W. Harkins' Letter to the American People

Last month, Chief Batton's 2023 State of the Nation Address led with a quote: "We as Choctaws rather choose to suffer and be free. My people are dear to me, with them I must go. My destiny is cast among the Choctaw people. If they suffer, so will I; if they prosper, then will I rejoice."

Chief George Washington Harkins wrote these words as he and his people departed from Vicksburg, Mississippi, along what would be soon after known as the Trail of Tears and Death. This month, Iti Fabvssa would like to look at the life of Chief Harkins and share with you his letter titled: 'To the American People.'

For a bit of background, Chief Harkins was the nephew of Greenwood LeFlore, Chief of the Okla Falaya Ulthi (Western District) of the Choctaw Nation. Following Choctaw tradition, Chief LeFlore was his maternal uncle, so he was raised to be his uncle's successor.

In his youth, he attended Centre College in Danville, Kentucky. In 1830, soon after the signing of the 1830 Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, Chiefs Nitvkechi, Mosholetvbbi, and Greenwood LeFlore were deposed of office. Chief Harkins was selected Chief of the Western District at the age of 20. In October of 1830, Chief Harkins and other Choctaw leaders went on an independent expedition to find suitable locations for resettlement in Indian Territory. Finding an ideal place for his people to resettle, Chief Harkins chose an area along the Red River.

In 1831, he led a group of 600 Choctaw people by steamboat from Vicksburg down the Mississippi River to the mouth of the Ouachita River. The night before they passed by Natchez, Mississippi, Chief Harkins wrote his letter 'To the American People.' The steamboats changed course at the mouth of the Ouachita River and paddled up where Harkins and his people disembarked at what is present-day Camden, Arkansas. As their party traveled by water, a separate attachment brought their horses and cattle by land. Throughout their journey, they had to endure the deadly cold winter weather. By the time both groups rejoined, they had lost two people and over 250 Choctaw ponies. With more losses, their group eventually made it to the Choctaw Nation and drew food rations near where the town of Idabel, Oklahoma, is today.

While the Choctaw Nation Government was reorganizing, Chief Harkins left to attend school at Cumberland University, where he received his law degree. In 1834, after the passage of the 1834 Choctaw Constitution, he returned to the Choctaw Nation and became the District Judge of the Apukshunnubbee District in the District Capitol of Alikchi, just east of present-day Ringold, Oklahoma.

During his life, he also served as an attorney for the Choctaw Nation. He was elected Chief of the Apukshunnubbee District from 1850 to 1857. Chief Harkins passed away in 1861 at the age of 50 years and was buried near Fort Towson.

Like many others, Chief Harkins spent his life in the service of the Choctaw people, helping to reestablish the Choctaw Nation. Of all his accomplishments, his letter 'To the American People' remains one of the most important historical documents of the Choctaw People.

This letter is on page 6 of the December 2, 1831 edition of The Natchez Weekly Courier and reproduced below. Our staff adds the italicized words to provide some additional context to the Chief's words.

The Choctaw's Lament

"In our paper today, will be found an address to the American people, by George W. Harkins, the present chief of the Choctaw Nation. Capt. Harkins, is the nephew, and successor in office of Greenwood Laflore; and is now on his way with a large body of people, to their new residence in the west. The address was hastily written with a pencil, on board of the steam boat Huron, the day before his arrival at our landing. The time was so short as to afford Capt. Harkins no opportunity to send us a revised sheet.

To the speculators and land jobbers, whose grasping avarice force this people from their homes and the graves of their forefathers, the language of this address will be unintelligible; but there are others, who, we presume, are not entirely devoid of shame, and to whom some allusion is made, who will feel the full force of its mild, but pointed rebuke."

To The American People

It is with considerable diffidence that I attempt to address the American people, knowing and feeling sensibly my incompetency; and believing that your highly and well improved minds would not be well entertained by the address of a Choctaw.

Chief Harkins, at the age of 21 and speaking in what may not have been his first language, spoke from a place of humility and respect. Understanding the paternal attitude of the US Government towards the Choctaw Nation, Chief Harkins was elegant in combining Choctaw leadership qualities and American education to demonstrate the humanity of the Choctaw people to all the citizens of the US.

But having determined to emigrate west of the Mississippi

river this fall, I have thought proper in bidding you farewell to make a few remarks expressive of my views, and the feelings that actuate me on the subject of our removal. Believing that our all is at stake and knowing that you readily sympathize with the distressed of every country, I confidently throw myself upon your indulgence and ask you to listen patiently.

Americans, having recently completed their own successful revolution, were supportive of the revolutions happening in Europe at this time. Harkins was stating that the Choctaw, like the distressed people in Europe, were also struggling with oppressive measure of a government.

I do not arrogate to myself the prerogative of deciding upon the expediency of the late treaty, yet I feel bound as a Choctaw, to give a distinct expression of my feelings on that interesting, (and to the Choctaws), all important subject. We were hedged in by two evils, and we chose that which we thought the least.

Harkins is referring to one evil being the State of Mississippi illegally extending its laws over the Choctaw Nation. The other evil is being forced to move west to Indian Territory and leaving their homeland behind.

Yet we could not recognize the right that the state of Mississippi had assumed, to legislate for us. Although the legislature of the state were qualified to make laws for their own citizens, that did not qualify them to become law makers to a people that were so dissimilar in manners and customs as the Choctaws are to the Mississippians. Admitting that they understood the people, could they remove that mountain of prejudice that has ever obstructed the streams of justice, and prevent their salutary influence from reaching my devoted countrymen. We as Choctaws rather chose to suffer and be free, than live under the degrading influence of laws, which our voice could not be heard in their formation.

Choctaw people who stayed in Mississippi would have to live under Mississippi state laws. Many of these laws actively undermined the freedoms of Choctaw people. Article 13 of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek made accommodations for Choctaws who stayed in Mississippi to become US citizens. However, the US broke this agreement by actively keeping Choctaws from registering. This meant Choctaw people who stayed, were not US citizens and were not protected by Choctaw law, the US Constitution, or Mississippi State Law. Choctaws who stayed in the homelands suffered greatly due to the lack of protection. It was not until 1924 that Native American people outside Oklahoma gained US Citizenship; however many Choctaws outside Oklahoma continued to suffer under segregation and Jim Crow laws well into the 1900s.

Much as the state of Mississippi has wronged us, I cannot find in my heart any other sentiment than an ardent wish for her prosperity and happiness.

I could cheerfully hope, that those of another age and generation may not feel the effects of those oppressive measures that have been so illiberally dealt out to us; and that peace and happiness may be their reward. Amid the gloom and horrors of the present separation, we are cheered with a hope that ere long we shall reach our destined land, and that nothing short of the basest acts of treachery will ever be able to wrest it from us, and that we may live free. Although your ancestors won freedom on the field of danger and glory, our ancestors owned it as their birthright, and we have had to purchase it from you as the vilest slaves buy their freedom.

One reason why Choctaw People are successful in the present-day is because we value focusing on the positive. Harkins, despite all that has happened to the Choctaw people, continues to focus on a positive future for the Choctaw people.

Yet it is said that our present movements are our own voluntary acts — such is not the case. We found ourselves like a benighted stranger, following false guides, until he was surrounded on every side, with fire and water. The fire was certain destruction, and a feeble hope was left him of escaping by water. A distant view of the opposite shore encourages the hope; to remain would be inevitable annihilation. Who would hesitate, or who would say that his plunging into the water was his own voluntary act? Painful in the extreme is the mandate of our expulsion. We regret that it should proceed from the mouth of our professed friend, for whom our blood was co-mingled with that of his bravest warriors, on the field of danger and death.

Harkins stated that the choice of voluntary removal of the Choctaw Nation was forced upon them. During the treaty, the United States used lies, bribes, coercion, and threatened the destruction and enslavement of the Choctaw Nation by the US Military if they did not sign the treaty.

But such is the instability of professions. The man who said that he would plant a stake and draw a line around us, that nev-

er should be passed, was the first to say he could not guard the lines, and drew up the stake and wiped out all traces of the line. I will not conceal from you my fears, that the present grounds may be removed. I have my foreboding; who of us can tell after witnessing what has already been done, what the next force may be. I ask you in the name of justice, for repose for myself and for my injured people. Let us alone — we will not harm you, we want rest. We hope, in the name of justice, that another outrage may never be committed against us, and that we may for the future be cared for as children, and not driven about as beasts, which are benefited by a change of pasture.

Harkins is using this metaphor to explain how the United States agreed to keep Americans out of the Choctaw Nation in treaties, yet actively encourage Americans to illegally emigrate into the Choctaw Nation to cause disruption to our society; he is worried that this may happen again. Regrettably, the US did indeed take our land from us again with the passage of the Five Civilized Tribes Act in 1906 and the Indian Relocation Act of 1956.

Taking an example from the American government, and knowing the happiness which its citizens enjoy under the influence of mild republican institutions, it is the intention of our countrymen to form a government assimilated to that of our white brethren in the United States, as nearly as their condition will permit. We know that in order to protect the rights and secure the liberties of the people, no government approximates so nearly to perfection as the one to which we have alluded. As east of the Mississippi we have been friends, so west we will cherish the same feelings with additional fervour; and although we may be removed to the desert, still we shall look with fond regard, upon those who have promised us their protection. Let that feeling be reciprocated.

Harkins continues with a positive outlook and the long-term goal of building a long-lasting and successful relationship with the United States, a relationship we are still building upon today.

Friends, my attachment to my native land was strong — that cord is now broken; and we must go forth as wanderers in a strange land! I must go — let me entreat you to regard us with feelings of kindness, and when the hand of oppression is stretched against us, let me hope that every part of the United States, filling the mountains and valleys, will echo and say stop, you have no power; we are the sovereign people, and our friends shall no more be disturbed. We ask you for nothing that is incompatible with your other duties.

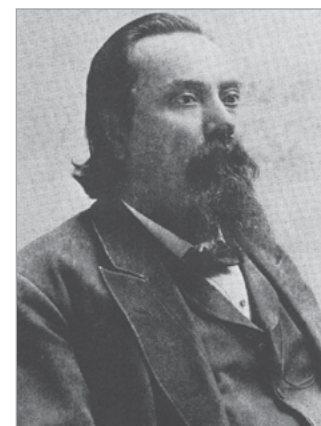
Harkins is asking US citizens to help stand up against the atrocities being committed against the Choctaw people and to ensure treaty stipulations are followed through by the US Government.

We go forth sorrowful, knowing that wrong has been done. Will you extend to us your sympathizing regards until all traces of disagreeable oppositions are obliterated, and we again shall have confidence in the professions of our white brethren. Here is the land of our progenitors, and here are their bones; they left them as a sacred deposit, and we have been compelled to venerate its trust; it is dear to us, yet we cannot stay, my people are dear to me, with them I must go. Could I stay and forget them and leave them to struggle alone, unaided, unfriended, and forgotten by our great father? I should then be unworthy the name of a Choctaw, and be a disgrace to my blood. I must go with them; my destiny is cast among the Choctaw people. If they suffer, so will I; if they prosper, then I will rejoice. Let me again ask you to regard us with feelings of kindness.

Harkins is speaking to the disgrace of leaving behind our Choctaw ancestors who, from a traditional perspective, we have a responsibility to protect even after they have passed away.

Yours with respect,

GEORGE W. HARKINS



Chief George W. Harkins



Scan the QR to view a story map details the forced removal route of Choctaw Chief George W. Harkins and 600 Choctaw people.

WILDLIFE & OUTDOORS

By Matt Gamble

October marks the beginning of fall big game seasons in the Choctaw Nation. Days of scouting, practicing at the range, preparing stands, and monitoring trail cameras finally get to be put into use. Roads all over the Choctaw Nation will be packed with trucks and off-road vehicles excitedly heading to deer camp.

Our staff has also been busy preparing for the upcoming seasons. Bear archery season begins October 1, and our team will be in the field ready to respond to bear harvests. Our staff will check in each Choctaw tribal member harvested bear and collect important biological information so that our biologists can make informed decisions regarding bear management. We work closely with the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife to share bear harvest information and population dynamics to ensure the viability of this incredible population of black bears. Our black bear population is growing and healthy, and we want to keep it that way. If you see us out and about during this time, do not hesitate to ask us questions about the wildlife and what is going on in your neck of the woods.

Whitetail deer seasons are by far the biggest draw for Choctaw Nation's big game seasons. People come from all over Oklahoma and the United States to experience the wild country and high-quality deer hunting that the Choctaw Nation offers. Our team will be busy monitoring harvest through the Chahta Achvffa portal and developing policy and procedures for our Deer Herd Enhancement Program that we will offer next year.

2023 will be the second year that Choctaw tribal members do not have to purchase any type of hunting or fishing license from the state while hunting or fishing within the Choctaw Nation. All you need to carry is proof of Choctaw tribal membership. All Choctaw tribal members will report their harvest from the Choctaw Nation through the Chahta Achvffa membership portal. If you do not have your account set up, I encourage you to do that before heading into the field. If you encounter any difficulties, you can contact us, and we can guide you through it or point you to the technical experts who can help.

We are excited about this new season and the opportunity to build upon the success that we saw last year. Whatever you hunt, we hope you get out there with friends and family and enjoy the Choctaw outdoors!

Choctaw Nation Wildlife Conservation

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, Washing Machine 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 who are responsible for the overall operations and physical integrity of each unit and the property.

Eligibility requirements for the Independent Elder Housing program are as follows:

- 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	

Choctaw Nation

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CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Housing Authority



Jackson graduates from OU

Jake Jackson recently graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a Bachelor of Science in public relations studies and a minor in enterprise studies.

In May, Jake started a career as a construction field manager in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for the national home builder, Rauch Coleman, while finishing classes online over the summer.



Conque turns 1

“Happy 1st Birthday to Cooper Mae! We love you so much baby girl!”- Mom and Dad

Hunter wins quilt

Pictured is the winner of the Crowder Choctaw Senior Quilt Raffle, Roy Hunter and the maker of the Quilt Carol Lindley.



Jones graduates from Los Angeles film mentorship

Choctaw tribal member Carole Jones has graduated from the 2023 Gold Rising summer mentorship program of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (The Oscars) in Los Angeles. In the program, Academy members provide young film professionals with the insider knowledge, skills and mentorship to achieve success in their film industry careers.

Carole has been working full-time in costume design for three years. She was one of 92 young adults chosen for the program this year from a pool of 7,449 applicants.

“For eight weeks, I received an intensive education from industry professionals in all aspects of film production. I costume designed a short film entitled “Estelle” that was produced by the Academy, and in the process, I made new relationships with my peers who I might work with on future projects,” Carole says. “I am extremely grateful to the Academy for this life changing experience.”

Gold Rising graduates received their diplomas at a red-carpet gala and reception at the Academy in Los Angeles.

Cole turns 13

Karson Cole recently turned 13.

This summer, Karson was very excited to have outgrown the height of his sister, Evelyn Harcrow, 16, who also shares an August birthday.



Martin Scott named August First Language Speaker of the Month



Martin Scott was honored as the August First Language Speaker of the Month during the August 12, 2023 Tribal Council Meeting.

Ball is 2023 Watermelon Queen

This year’s Rush Springs Watermelon Queen is Miss Lillian Ball, a member of the Choctaw tribe.

Selected in May, Lilly is currently promoting the 78th Annual Rush Springs Watermelon Festival around the entire state of Oklahoma.

Lilly is the daughter of Daniel and Lilly Ball. She will be a senior at Rush Springs High School. She has one sister, Harper.

Lilly is serving her second year as president of the Rush Springs FFA Chapter. She plays softball and basketball and is a straight-A student.



Roberts named First Language Speaker and Veteran of the Month

Wilson Roberts, originally of Bennington, Oklahoma, is Choctaw Nation’s Veteran of the Month.

Roberts began attending boarding school when he was five years old. After his eighth-grade year, he left school and became a general laborer until he was old enough to join the U.S. Army.

He entered basic training at Ft. Riley, Kansas, and attended artillery training at White Sands Missile Range at Ft. Bliss in El Paso, Texas. He was taught Missile Battalion training and trained as a radar operator and air traffic control.

In 1961, Roberts went to Korea for one year and returned to Gardner, Kansas, as a radar operator.

He worked at numerous bases, including Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, and Heidelberg, Germany, operating multi-million-dollar PXs. After his third year in Germany, Roberts started a club and began having powwows. He is still in contact with many from those days, enjoying MWR with other tribes.

Roberts was in Turkey on 9/11 and returned to Ft. Sill in 1992, where he managed the PX the last five years of his career.

He has been married to Sharon for 56 years, and they have three sons, 14 grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren.

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



Regan named August Veteran of the month

Charles Regan was born in Houston, Texas and graduated high school in San Antonio. He enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1962 and received his oath from his father, a Captain in the U.S. Marine Corps and commanding officer of the San Antonio recruiting office.

Regan attended the Naval Training Center in San Diego, Calif., was transferred to the Naval Air Station in Miramar, attached to Fighter Squadron VA-91 as a plane captain. He later transferred with VF-91, a F8U fighter squadron supplying air support in the Gulf of Vietnam and Laos, to aircraft carrier U.S.S. Ranger CVA61, and sailed out of San Francisco patrolling off the west coast. Regan served as a plane captain on F8U Crusader aircraft on the flight deck of an aircraft carrier, a job for the “Roof Rats,” the “most dangerous job on earth.”

He traveled to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; Subic Bay, Philippines; Hong Kong, China; Yasuko, Japan; and the South China Sea. He transferred to Memphis, Tenn., to attend “A” school in aircraft engine mechanics. After graduation, he transferred to the Naval Air Training Center in New Iberia, Louisiana where he was assigned to VT-27 as a TS2A aircraft mechanic, a training squadron for multi-engine propeller aircraft pilots. Regan moved to Corpus Christi, Texas when the base closed until his discharge in 1968. In 1974, he enlisted in the SEABEES Reserve in McAlester. He was an equipment operator and learned to operate heavy equipment. He made drills at the Navy Base, McAlester, and Gulf Port, Mississippi. He was honorably discharged in 1980 and says his favorite assignment was New Iberia, Louisiana.

Regan resides in McAlester, where he has worked on a pipeline, in a funeral home, and in the Kibois organization. His family is Dr. Jason Regan and spouse Stacie (PharmD), granddaughter Reese, and grandson Rhett. His full-blood Choctaw grandmother was an original enrollee who lived in Stigler.

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



Williams turns 96

Choctaw tribal member N.K. Williams, born in Kinta/Tucker Knob area on July 13, 1927, recently celebrated his 96th birthday.



Wright celebrates Fifth Birthday

Blake Winter Wright of Wasilla, Alaska turned 5 on August 3, 2023.



James wins county fair tractor pull

Clayton James, a Choctaw tribal member, recently won first place in the Pontotoc County Fair Pedal Pushers Tractor Pull.

He will get to compete in the Cleveland County Fair Pedal Pushers Tractor Pull in September. Clayton is the son of Jerrod and Laura James of Ada.

He is the grandson of Ted and Sharon Brewer of Union Valley, Oklahoma and Pamela Mckinney of Broken Bow, Oklahoma.



AFFORDABLE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM

[FCC.GOV/ACP](https://www.fcc.gov/acp)

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

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CHOCTAW COLOR GUARD

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

APPLY BY CONTACTING: (800) 522-6170 EXT. 2160
VETERANSADVOCACY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

MEMBERSHIP

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY!

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION

HOUSING EDUCATION

The Choctaw Nation Housing Authority Service Coordination Department is offering free Homebuyers and Rental Education Workshops in September for potential homebuyers, new homeowners and renters.

For dates, times and location of classes, please call or email:
 580.642.8981
HOUSINGEDUCATION@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Attend a workshop for your chance of a drawing.

Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

SCHOOL OF CHOCTAW LANGUAGE NOW ONLINE!

Choctaw Nation proudly introduces Chahta Anumpa Aikhvna webpage! Enroll in classes, explore the language

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [CHOCTAWSCHOOL.COM](https://www.choctawschool.com)

Scan to learn more about the program.

Choctaw Nation School of Choctaw Language

FOOD DISTRIBUTION PROGRAM

Guide Rate Enhancements and New Food for Participants

Effective September 1, 2023, the amount of food items for participants of the Choctaw Food Distribution Program will increase and new items will be available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO BECOME A PARTICIPANT, CALL 800.522.6170 OR VISIT [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/FOOD-DISTRIBUTION/](https://www.choctawnation.com/services/food-distribution/)

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Horseshoes



Women's Ringer Champion, Kelsey Eason.



Men's Ringers Champion, Jamey Howzle.



Men's Singles Winners: First Place, Dwight Cubit, Second Place, Tim Jones, Third Place, William Ward.



Women's Singles Winners: First Place, Kisha Bohanan, Second Place, Raylene Masters, Third Place, Phylis Bohanan.



Men's Doubles Champions: First Place, Mike Mings and Dwight Cupid, Second Place, William Ward and Cody Ward, Third Place, Tim Jones and Albert Jones.



Youth Ringers Champion, Thunder Simes.



Photo by Mallory Phelps
Horseshoes is another of the highly competitive sports at Labor Day.



Youth Singles winners: First Place Thunder Simes, Second Place, Braxton Bacon, Third Place, Matthew Doyle

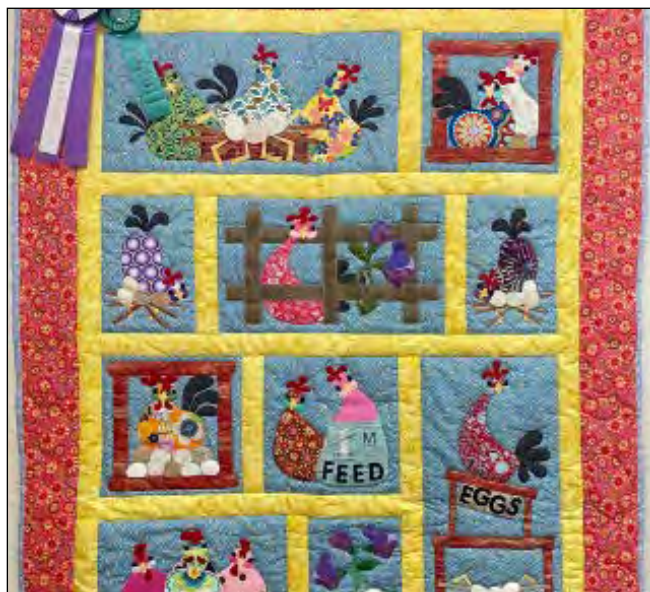


Women's Doubles Winners: First Place, Kelsey Eason and Patricia Bohanon Second Place, Samantha Sennett and Falisha Doyle, Third Place, Sequina Hunter and Nakisha Bohanon.

Quilt Show



First Place Machine Quilted, Michelle Wade.



Peoples Choice: Pat Howell.



First Place Machine and Hand Quilted, Lois Thomas.



Photo by Deidre Elrod

Several beautiful and elaborate quilts were on display during the Labor Day festival.



First Place Hand Stitched, Lois Thomas.

Dominoes & Checkers



Dominoes: First Place, Alfred Crosby and Second Place, Chuck Holt



Checkers: First Place, Jasen Baker and Second Place, Lawrence Doyle.



Photo by Deidre Elrod

A quilt show attendee checks out the first place machine quilted winner.



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

If they can't see your eyes, they don't know your next move. Competitors of all ages competed for the grand prize and bragging rights during the annual checkers tournament on September 3, 2023.

I AM CHOCTAW PROUD

TOGETHER, WE'RE MORE

YOU ARE THE EXPERT OF YOUR PATIENT EXPERIENCE!

RECEIVE SURVEYS AFTER YOUR CLINIC VISITS IN YOUR EMAIL & PROVIDE FEEDBACK THAT IS ENTIRELY CONFIDENTIAL.

Choctaw Nation Health Services

2023 CHOCTAW NATION COLLEGE CONNECT

NOVEMBER 4, 2023 | 8:00 AM

ALL PARENTS & STUDENTS | AGES 14-18 | GRADES 9-12

CNO HEADQUARTERS
1802 CHUKKA HINA | DURANT, OK 74701

TO REGISTER FOR THIS FREE EVENT VISIT
CHOCTAWCOLLEGECONNECT.COM OR SCAN HERE:

HIGHEREDUCATION@CHOCTAWNATION.COM | 800-522-6170

Choctaw Nation College Connect

Social Dancing



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

Shilohbish-Ihunko Imbatiya, who turns one on October 17, is chosen by Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Princess, Nalani Thompson, to be her partner for the Stealing Partners Dance.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Eli Boykin chases Serinity Florez during the raccoon dance. The chasing in the dance mimics young raccons playing.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Newly crowned Junior Miss Choctaw Nation, Kassidy Lee enjoys some time dancing.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Gennavie Tom grabs Brad Joe during the stealing partners dance. The dance started as a way for young Choctaw people to get to know each other.

Choctaw Village



Photo by Mekayla McClure

Flint knapping was one of the many activities people could try out at the village.



Photo by Mekayla McClure

Select pieces of pottery were on display at the pottery booth in the village.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Gospel singers of all ages entertained the crowd at the Choctaw Village.

Bowshoot



- Mens Bowshoot Winners:**
 First Place, Daniel Howard
 Second Place, Chester Cowen
 Third Place, Dexter Underwood
- Women's Bow Shoot Winners:**
 First Place, Kelbie Kennedy
 Second Place, Mary Dove
 Third Place, Valerie Underwood

- Youth 8U:**
 First Place, Cinch Simpson
 Second Place, Gage Parrish
 Third Place, Zaylee Marable



Photo by Christian Toews

Ross Green helps a young contestant with her bow and arrow.



Photo by Christian Toews

The bow, "Iti Tanampo," has been deeply associated with Choctaw warriors and hunters for at least the last 1,300 years



Photo by Krislan Garside

Seth Fairchild and Ross Green help youngsters with their bow and arrow skills.

GET IN THE KNOW

Stay up-to-date with what's happening in the Choctaw Nation by subscribing to our weekly email list.

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HEPATITIS C PREVENTION, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
WWW.CDC.GOV/KNOWMOREHEPATITIS

Choctaw Nation Health Services

PREVENTATIVE SCREENINGS

DISCUSS RISK FACTORS AND SCREENING OPTIONS WITH YOUR PROVIDER TODAY

Participating in preventative health screenings is one way to take charge of your health. These measures and tests identify diseases before symptoms are present. Some conditions show no warning signs, and these screenings can detect problems earlier when the conditions are possibly preventable or more treatable.

The first step in screening is to schedule an appointment with your primary care provider. At this appointment, you can discuss the benefits and risks of the screenings as well as develop a screening plan tailored to you and your unique health needs.

To reach your end goal of aging with grace, you should stay as healthy as possible. Participating in health screenings is an essential part of achieving this goal.

Choctaw Nation Health Services

CAROLE AYERS EXHIBIT
 APRIL 11 - OCTOBER 14

KEEPING OUR HERITAGE: CHOCTAW PEOPLE, LIFE, AND ANIMAL KINSHIP

This exhibit will display many of District Nine elder and Choctaw artist Carole Ayers' watercolor paintings which highlight Choctaw heritage and celebrate our culture in its diverse forms.

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

2023 Art Show Winners

Painting
 First Place: Paul King, "Forever Chahta: Building Traditions"
 Second Place: Candace Shanholtzer, "Choctaw Drummer"
 Third Place: Rodney Ridge, "Fire Dancer"

Digital Art & Mixed Media
 First Place: Susan Locke Charlesworth, "We Gather Around the Sacred Fires"
 Second Place: Bobby Von Martin, "Four Generations"
 Third Place: Tammy Shelton Wilson, "Momma Bear's Love"

Sculpture
 First Place: Lyman Choate, "Faith, Family, and Culture"
 Second Place: Kelton Cloud, "Squash Blossom Basket"
 Third Place: Ross Ridge, Sculpture: "1835 New Beginnings"

Basketry
 First Place: Debbie Baker, "First Purse"
 Second Place: Susan Locke Charlesworth, "Indigo Shadows of our Ancestors Designs"
 Third Place: Lizabeth Mitchell, "Large Storage Basket"

Drawing
 First Place: Paul King, "A, Chahta Sia"
 Second Place: Gwen Coleman Lester, "Choctaw Drum"
 Third Place: Lisa Taylor, "Vlla Nakni"
Jewelry

First Place: Cliff Wilson, Jr., "Shooter"
 Second Place: Cliff Wilson, Jr., "Chahta Game"
 Third Place: Antonia Ruston, "Beaded Gold Snake Dangle Earrings"

Diverse Art Forms
 First Place: Edmon Perkins Jr., "Sinti Lapitta Horned Serpent"
 Second Place: Jeanette Ozee, "CNO Seal"
 Third Place: Gregg Standridge, "Kicking Up Dust"

Fiber Art:
 First Place: Debra Pruet, "Twined Skirt"
 Second Place: Margaret Riley Santham, "Women's Skirt"
 Third Place: Jane Semple Umsted, "Rev. Bertram Bobb"

Overall Winners
Best of Show
 Dylan Cavin, "Sunday's Expenses"

Choctaw Heritage Award
 Edmon Perkins, Jr., "Sinti Lapitta Horned Serpent"

People's Choice
 Antonia Ruston
 "Beaded Gold Snake Dangle Earrings"

Himmak Pila "Future" Award:
 Lyman Choate, "Wondering What's Ahead"

Honorable Mention:
 Samuel Paul Stitt, "Sam's Bag"



Best of Show: Dylan Cavin "Sunday's Expenses"



Himmak Pila "Future" Award: Lyman Choate "Wondering What's Ahead"



Photos by Christian Toews

Many of the arts show winners were able to attend the award ceremony which was held at the Choctaw Cultural Center prior to Labor Day this year.

Worship Service



Photos by Deidre Elrod



JUROR SUMMONS

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

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

NEW EXHIBIT

BOK ABAYIYA: PRACTICED HANDS AND THE ARTS OF CHOCTAW BASKETRY

SCAN OR GO TO: [BIT.LY/CCC-EXHIBITIONS](https://bit.ly/ccc-exhibitions)

JULY 22, 2023 - MARCH 30, 2024

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

MARKET HOURS

Open 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
 Thursday: 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
 Markets will be closed the last two days of each month for inventory.

October 2023
 All markets open weekdays, October 2-27
Closed: October 30 and 31
 Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation
 Participants can request a calendar at their location.

ANTLERS 400 S.W. "O" ST., 580-298-6443
 Food demo October 17

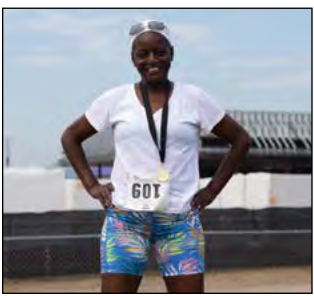
BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842
 Food demo October 19

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

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

POTEAU 106 B St., 918-649-0431
 Food demo October 26
 This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Fittest Choctaw



Women's Legend Division: Linda Walthall, first place.



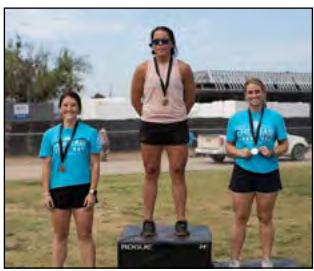
Teen Boys Division: Skyler Beasley.



Lyla Cox has fun while competing in the Fittest Warrior



Men's Masters Division: Gabriel Canon, third place, Caleb Taylor, first place and Paul Crow, second place.



Women's Open Division: Nicole Benson, third place, Tiffanie Burchfield, first place and Autumn Benson, second place.



Legends Division: Robert Harley, third place and Anthony Dillard, first place.



Photos by Christian Toews
Women's Masters Division: Teresa Gardner, third place, Shannon Reynolds, first place and Beverly Cannon, second place.



Men's Open Division: Cody Hicks, first place and Jordan Benson, second place.



Teen Girls Division: Myka Taylor, first place and Abigail Crow, second place.

Chief Batton's Youth Fitness Challenge



Photo by Christian Toews
Jayda Stout sprints around the turn during the Youth Physical Fitness Challenge.



Photo by Christian Toews
Creedon Clark jumps over part of the obstacle course at the Youth Fitness Challenge.



Photo by Christian Toews
Above and Below: Kids participate in the Annual Chief Batton's Physical Fitness Challenge. The challenge helps teach children that fitness can be fun.



Photo by Chris Jennings

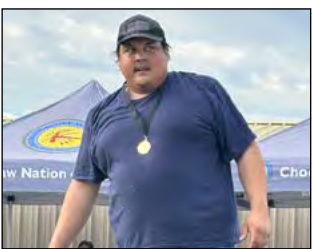
Tough Tough



Women's Division: Tiffanie Burchfield, first place and Kristen Buckallew, second place. Men's Division: Matt Harjo, first place and Dylan Pingleton, second place.



Photos by Kellie Matherly



Men's Fighting Heart: Jonathan Worley



Women's Fighting Heart: Ruby Murphy



Photos by Christian Toews
Contestants Nicole Taylor (Above) and Kirk Taylor (Below) take part in the newest addition to the annual Tough Tough competition, the Gator Pull.



Chair Volleyball



Photo Courtesy of Chief Batton
The District 4 Elder Chair Volleyball team took home the win during the Elder Chair Volleyball Tournament on Friday.



Photo by McKayla McClure
Chair Volleyball is serious business for many Choctaw elders. The annual Labor Day Festival Tournament is just one of the many chances elders get to show off their sills.

Cornhole



Photo by McKayla Monroe

Cornhole is a game in which players or teams take turns throwing bean bags at a raised, angled board with a hole in its far end. The goal is to score points by either landing a bag on the board (one point) or putting a bag through the hole (three points).



Photo Provided
First Place: South Central Baggers (Brian Mayfield and Ashley Standridge)



Photo Provided
Second Place: Meashintubby (Archie Meashintubby and Neville Meashintubby)



Photo Provided
Third Place: Jase & Seth (Jace Fuentes and Seth Fore)

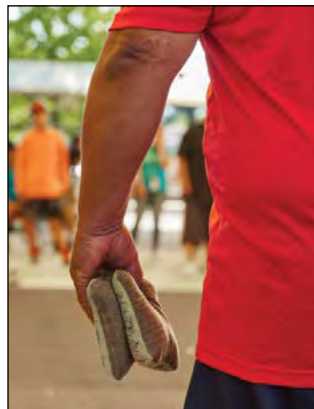


Photo by McKayla Monroe
The Cornhole Tournament is a newer edition to the Choctaw Labor Day Festival, but has turned into a crowd favorite event.

Chahta Anumpa Aiiikhvna - October Language Lesson

Check your Choctaw

Match the English work to the Choctaw word.

- | | | |
|-------------|-------|---------------|
| 1. shulush | _____ | a. purple |
| 2. okchakko | _____ | b. yellow |
| 3. Halito | _____ | c. one |
| 4. lakna | _____ | d. blue |
| 5. wak | _____ | e. white |
| 6. homma | _____ | f. cow |
| 7. achvffa | _____ | g. red |
| 8. lusa | _____ | h. shoe/shoes |
| 9. tohbi | _____ | i. hello |
| 10. homakbi | _____ | j. black |

Read the Choctaw sentence and circle the correct translation of each sentence.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 11. Takkon vt homma. | 12. Wak vt lusa. |
| a. The apple is yellow | a. The shoes are black |
| b. The girl runs/is running. | b. The cow is black |
| c. The apple is red | c. The black cow is eating |
| 13. Ofi yvt lakna. | 14. Shukshi yvt homma micha weki. |
| a. The dog is yellow. | a. The watermelon is red and heavy. |
| b. The girls chase the dog. | b. The watermelon is red. |
| c. The yellow dog is sitting. | c. I like red and white shoes. |

Circle the letter of the correct answer.

- 15. What does 'Oklahoma' mean?**
- a. red dog b. red people
c. red warrior d. red horse
- 16. What does 'Chi pisa la chike' mean?**
- a. You're Welcome b. Come Back
c. Come on in d. I'll see you later
- 17. Which Choctaw place name means "red warrior"?**
- a. Oklahoma b. Tvshkahomma
c. Bokchito d. Panola

Numbers - Write the numeral for each number name.

18. tuchina _____ 19. tahlapi _____
20. achvffa _____ 21. tuklo _____

Answers: 1.h, 2.d, 3.i, 4.b, 5.f, 6.g, 7.c, 8.j, 9.e, 10.a, 11.c, 12.b, 13.a, 14.a, 15.b, 16.d, 17.b, 18.3, 19.5, 20.1, 21.2

www.choctawschool.com

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

October 3	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
October 4	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
October 6	Crowder	By Appointment
October 10	Wright City	10 am - 1 pm
October 11	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
October 13	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
October 13	Coalgate	12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
October 17	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
October 18	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
October 18	Stigler	By Appointment
October 24	Idabel	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
October 25	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
October 27	Atoka	12:30 p.m. - 12 p.m.
October 27	Coalgate	8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Call 580-642-6007 for an Appointment

Stickball



Photo by Christian Toews



Photo by Christian Toews



Photo by Christian Toews



Photo by Christian Toews



Photo by Christian Toews



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall



Photo by Kelsey Brown



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

Women's Labor Day Stickball Tournament Champions: Rouge



Photo by Judson Wall

Men's Labor Day Stickball Tournament Champions: Bok Cito



Photo by Judson Wall

Women's Labor Day Stickball Tournament Runners-up: Chikasha Toli Ihoo



Photo by Judson Wall

Men's Labor Day Stickball Tournament Runners-up: Beaver Dam



Photo by Kelsey Brown



Photo by Kelsey Brown



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall



Photos by Kendra Germany-Wall

Chikasha Toli Ihoo wore pink jerseys in honor of their teammate and coach, Jennifer Kellner, who is fighting breast cancer. Kellner was present to cheer on her team and present them with the runner-up trophy on September 3.



Photo by Krislan Garside

Families have been attending the Choctaw Labor Day Festival for decades. Many families even tent camp, where they enjoy food and fellowship with family and friends.



Photo by Mekayla McClure

Tvshka Homma stickball players huddle before their game as a future stickball player practices on the sidelines.



Photo by Christian Toews

Matt Harjo competes in the Tough Tough Choctaw contest.



Photo by Christian Toews

The carnival is always a big attraction at Labor Day.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Outgoing Choctaw Royalty, Haleigh Gibson, Dorothy Rogers, and Candis Battice-Louis, share a conversation backstage.



Photo by Rodolphe Foucher

The night sky is lit up by the neon lights of the carnival.



Photo by Mekayla Monroe

Competitors of all ages take part in the annual Labor Day Checkers Tournament.



Photo by Mekayla McClure

Competitors compete in the annual Choctaw Nation Labor Day Stickball Tournament.



Photo by Mekayla McClure

A dancer carries a hand-crafted rattle during the Gourd Dance.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Jacoby Bell does a high jump during the Chief's Physical Fitness Challenge.



Photos by Chris Jennings

Left: Isabel Crow runs through the boxes during the Chief's Physical Fitness Challenge. Right: Cathy Branyan makes her way through an arm tunnel her family made for her as she finished the 5K



Photo by Rylee Byrd

Festival goers check out the buffalo on the Labor Day Buffalo Bus Tour.



Photo by Christian Toews

Linda Walthall rests after completing the 5K.



Photo by Christian Toews

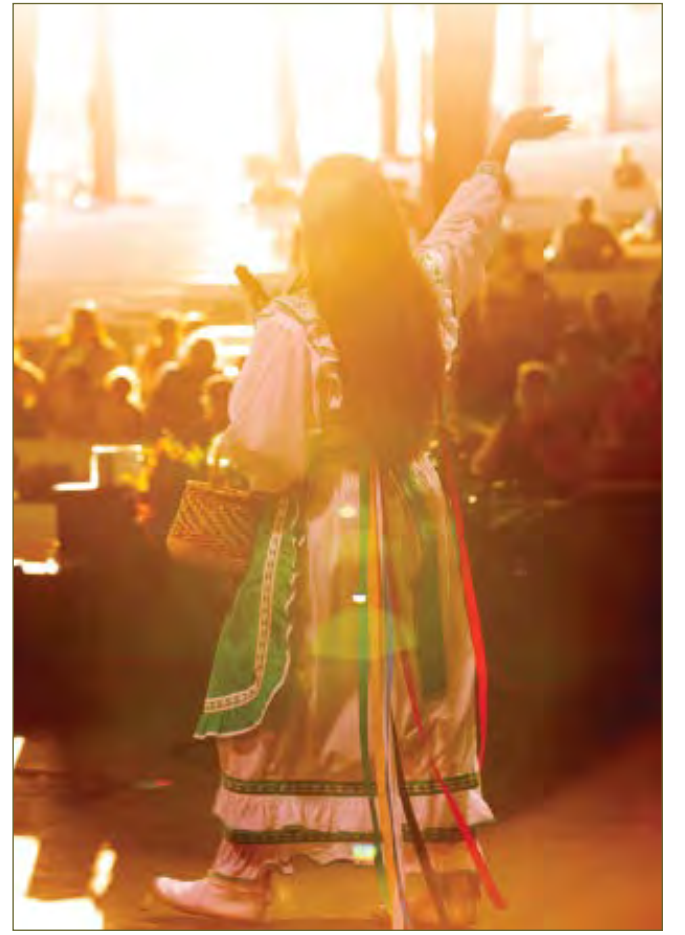
Chief Gary Batton makes the turn at the halfway mark during the Labor Day 5k.

2023 Choctaw Royalty



Photos by Rodolphe Foucher

Princess candidates wait backstage to go on stage for their portion of the pageant.



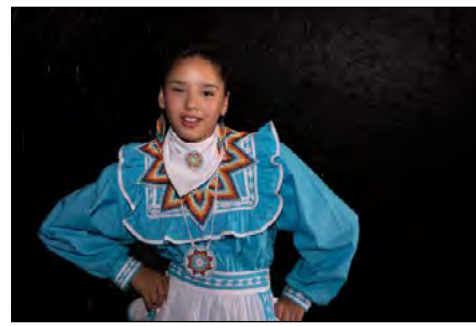
Photos by Chris Jennings

Top left: Newly crowned Choctaw Princesses, Little Miss Choctaw Nation Sophia McFarland, from District 11, Jr. Miss Choctaw Nation, Cassidy Lee, from District 9 and Miss Choctaw Nation, Aliyah Myers, from District 7, pose for pictures with Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. after receiving their crowns. Bottom left: Paisley Tenequer walks onto the stage. Right: Micha Davidson waves to the crowd during her portion of the pageant.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Choctaw princess candidates perform the Lord's Prayer during the opening ceremonies of the Princess Pageant.



Photos by Chris Jennings

Top left: Sophia McFarland poses backstage. Top right: Jace Reich escorts Addyson York onto the stage. Bottom left: Backstage was a constant bustle of activity. Bottom right: Outgoing Little Miss Choctaw Nation, Dorothy Rogers places the crown on new Little Miss Choctaw Nation, Cassidy Lee.

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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

October 2023

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Chief Batton delivers the 2023 State of the Nation.



Page 11:

Find out the results of the 2023 Labor Day fitness competitions.



Page 13:

Check out the highlights from this year's Labor Day Festival.

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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Choctaw Nation Small Business Development

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