



September 2021 Issue



AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021



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District 7 Tribal Council runoff election results

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



Joey Tom
Council, District 7

In the General Election on July 10, District 7 (encompassing the Antlers and Wright City areas), the two candidates that received the most votes were Tom with 40.07% and Johnico, 36.67%. Since neither candidate received more than 50% of the total votes, the race proceeded to a Run-off Election between the two candidates.

Also winning Tribal Council seats in the General Election were Jess Henry in District 4 and Anthony Dillard, District 10.

Other districts that were up for election, but drew no opposition were District 9 Council Member James Dry, District 6 Council Member Jennifer Woods, and District 12 Council Member James Frazier.

According to the Constitution of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, after an installation ceremony, the Council Members will begin their new terms at noon on the first Monday of September 2021. For complete results of the Choctaw Nation elections, visit <http://www.choctawnation.com/elections> and other Choctaw Nation social media.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Official Election Results
2021 Runoff Election
Saturday, August 7, 2021

| Tribal Council Member - District 7 | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|--------|
| Adrian Johnico | 603 | 47.74% |
| Joey Tom | 660 | 52.26% |

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Releases ARPA Funding Plan

Durant, Okla. (August 17, 2021) – Tribal members with the greatest needs were strongly considered as the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) announced the initial plan of distribution of funding via the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) yesterday. The allocation of funds was developed after also receiving guidance from the U.S. Treasury on acceptable distributions for the COVID-19 relief program.

“Our elders and those Choctaw families with children were our priorities,” said Chief Gary Batton, as the planning for \$944 million in relief was given to the Choctaw Nation.

Batton unveiled basics of the plan in a video presentation made available to tribal members yesterday.

“The plan centers around taking care of our elders and is available to all Choctaw tribal members living anywhere in the U.S. who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,” Batton said.

Starting Aug. 16, 2021, members 55 and older and those ages 18+ with a disability can receive a \$200 monthly grocery allowance for the next two years.

Also, beginning Sept. 1, all Choctaw members can receive allocations for the following programs:

- Newborn-17 years: \$700 annually for Internet access and technology, student and childcare assistance for two years. This Dependent Economic Recovery program provides a \$1400 total benefit.
- Tribal members 18+ 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.

Registered tribal members can receive additional information and how to apply at www.choctawnation.com/covidrelief.

Frequently Asked Questions

Choctaw Nation's plan for the American Rescue Plan Act funds.

Who is eligible?

- All Choctaw tribal members living anywhere in the US are eligible for various portions of the funding.
- Tribal members 18 – 54 for food, internet and technology and living expenses for two years.
- Ages 55 and older and those ages 18 – 54 with a disability can receive money for monthly grocery allowance for the next two years.
- Tribal members Newborn – 17 can receive annual funding for internet and technology.

When can I apply?

- Beginning Aug. 16 for those 55+ or those 18+ with a disability.
- Beginning Sept. 1 for those Newborn – 17 for internet access and technology and those 18+ for food, internet, technology and living expenses.

How much is available?

- Tribal members 55 and older and 18 – 54 with a disability: \$200/month grocery allowance. This is a \$4,800 total benefit over two years.
- Newborn – 17: \$700 annually for Internet access and technology and student and child care assistance for two years. The Dependent Economic Recovery program provides a total benefit of \$1,400.
- Tribal members 18+ can receive \$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.

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.

Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

Casino Expansion

Halito, The Choctaw Nation continues to thrive - with the grand opening of the Choctaw Casino & Resort – Durant expansion!

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

I'm excited because this expansion means 1,000 new jobs, revenue that funds much-needed services for tribal members, millions in economic growth for Oklahoma, and additional dollars our tribal government invests in education and infrastructure improvements for all Oklahomans.

A lot is happening around the Nation, including students going back to school. The Choctaw Nation has always valued education. We offer a variety of

programs to assist tribal members, regardless of where they are on their educational journey.

From the Partnership of Summer School Education (POSSE) program, the High School Services Program (HSSS), to the Higher Education Program (HEP) and career development program, the Choctaw Nation is able to provide these needed educational services to our members, with the dollars gained from expansion projects like the Durant resort expansion.

For more information about our educational services, visit www.choctawnation.com/tribal-services/education.

Yakohe and God bless!



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Self Care is Essential

It's amazing how fast time passes. Three quarters of the year have flown by, the kids are back in school and the fall season will be upon us soon. Parents will begin helping their children with homework, ball games at school will begin, along with the many fall holidays.

As we all continue to experience life with a pandemic, we understand that it has had an impact on all of us, emotionally, mentally and physically. It is important that we take care of ourselves for one another, our families, and our communities.

I wanted to highlight the importance of taking care of ourselves as September is Self-Care Awareness Month. Often, we tend to go about our daily lives without stopping to set aside some time for ourselves. Protecting our physical and mental wellbeing has to be a priority in our life. You don't have to feel

guilty about taking some time for yourself. It can be simple as getting some sleep, spending time outside, or mindful meditation. Taking an active role in self-care tends to lessen the feelings of despair and hopelessness.

September is also Suicide Prevention Month. Choctaw Nation recognizes the importance of suicide prevention.

In 2016, Chief Batton signed a proclamation declaring September as Suicide Prevention Month. The proclamation urged all employees and tribal members to work towards reducing the stigma for mental health-seeking behaviors, speak out about suicide prevention, and make others aware of the signs and symptoms of suicidal ideation.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health, suicide was the second leading cause of death for Native Americans between the ages of 10 and 34 in 2019.

The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) encourages associates to understand that one suicide is too many. CNSHA embraces the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration concept of 'Zero Suicide' and is trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of suicidal ideation.

If you or someone you know has suicidal thoughts, please don't hesitate to contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-8255. Your life matters. You are not alone, and help is available. God bless.

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SPECIAL VACCINATION EVENT



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Employee Chaplain

A Peculiar People

The Apostle Peter writes, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." -1 Peter 2:9.

Today we shall look at the phrase, "a peculiar people." Webster's Dictionary defines "peculiar" as characteristic of only one person, group, or thing. It also means, distinctive or different from the usual.

The modern church is slowly beginning to lose this. Instead of maintaining God's holiness and values, the church is becoming to be another social place. Believers are losing their distinctiveness as God's chosen and not continue in His marvelous light but are regressing into the darkness of the world.

When we look at the word "peculiar" in the light of God's word, it also means "a people for a possession." Believers are possessions of God.

"For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:20.

Instead of glorifying God in our body, believers glorify their body as their own and as they please. And instead of the spirit glorifying God, the spirit is used to glorify self. To compensate for this, we wear jewelry with religious symbolisms and do works of a philanthropic nature. Believers have turned the church into another social institution and not a soul-saving institution ordained by God.

The Apostle Paul founded the Galatian church. He had been gone for about three years and upon returning, he found them in danger of departing from the simple faith of the Gospel. False teachers had come and caused them to lose faith and confidence in God. The false teachers had claimed that Paul was not a true apostle.

He writes the letter to the Galatian church. The Book of Galatians is a fighting epistle. Paul's words are the outbursts of a fearless and faithful man. He closes the letter with, "From henceforth let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." Galatians 6:17.

He had been physically punished for his stand on the word of God. In this day of ease and self-indulgence, we easily pass through life without anyone noticing that we are Christians.

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Through the College Freshman Year Initiative, we look to unify the community of Choctaw students and empower them to make informed decisions about their academic futures.

With the assistance of First Year Experience Coordinators and partnerships with various campuses across the state, Choctaw students will find the appropriate tools to achieve their goals through graduation.

If you are a first-time freshman, Choctaw tribal member, and are considering attending one of the schools listed, contact our office today.



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Choctaw Nation College Freshman Year Initiative

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Karsyn Johnson follows future dreams by digging up the past

By Christian Toews

Karsyn Johnson's love of history has taken her around the world. She recently returned from an archeological field school in Israel, where she was able to experience a variety of learning opportunities. Johnson was one of only four archeology students allowed at the field school due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the unrest in the area.

Johnson grew up in Ada, Oklahoma, and is now a senior at the University of Oklahoma, where she is completing her bachelor's degree in archeology. She is a proud Choctaw tribal member and says she is very thankful for all the Choctaw Nation's assistance throughout her education.

"Money can stop people from doing what they want to do, which is really sad. The fact that I can get an education and they have helped me pay for it is something I definitely don't



Karsyn Johnson recently spent six weeks in Israel, where she and other students were able to travel to many ancient sites and see famous archaeological sites.

take lightly," said Johnson.

Johnson said the lead-up to the field school was very intense because she graduates in December, and this was her last chance to complete these prerequisites to graduate.

According to Johnson, she had to be a squeaky wheel to get into the field school in Israel.

"You have to fight for what you want. You have to have the drive," she said. Johnson's original plan was to attend a field school last summer. However, the COVID-19 pandemic canceled that plan. With the ongoing pandemic and conflict in the area this year, the field school was canceled again.

However, Johnson was persistent and determined not to let the pandemic stop her from achieving her dreams.

According to Johnson, a professor from Hebrew University made arrangements for Johnson, two other students from OU, and one student from Canada to attend a field school.

While in Israel, she went to Tel Hazor on the north side of the Sea of Galilee, where she helped with preservation, organization and storage. According to Johnson, she helped preserve ancient artifacts from previous dig seasons, and the professor from Hebrew University would educate them on the artifacts.

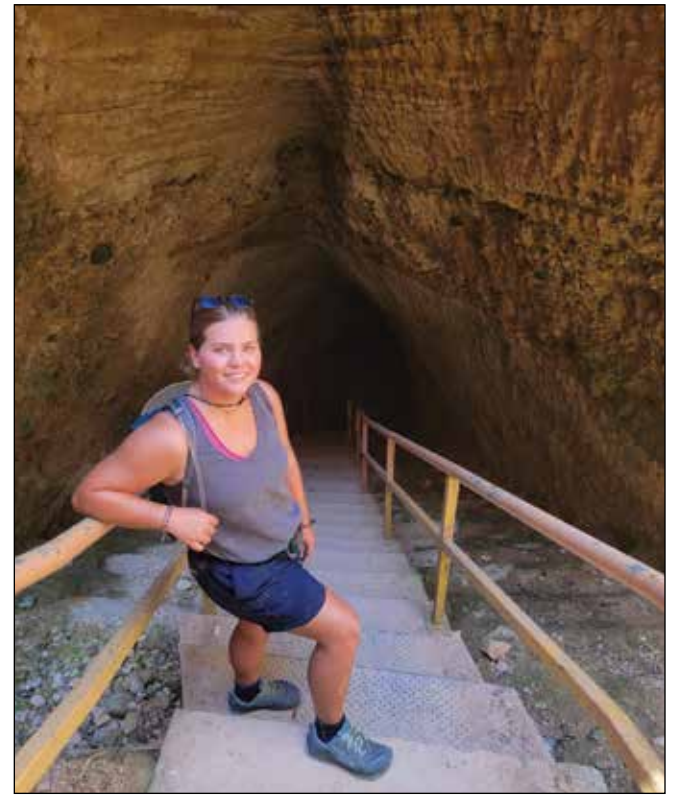
"We learned a lot of terminology, we learned about the different kinds of artifacts and where they were found. As we were organizing, she was also teaching us, which was really cool," said Johnson.

Johnson spent six weeks in Israel, where she and the other students were able to travel to many ancient sites and see famous archeological sites that are thousands of years old.

Johnson went on to explain how this trip was much more than just an academic experience.

"This trip was academic but also a soul-searching trip for me. I was able to figure out more about what I want to do and where I'm headed because I graduate this year," she said. While in the northern part of Israel, she met with an underwater archeologist and saw many artifacts removed from underwater. She said she figured out her next step of returning to Israel to attending a master's program in underwater archeology.

Johnson said that she encourages anyone interested in



Photos Provided

Johnson was one of only four archeology students allowed at the field school due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the unrest in the area.

archeology to try it out.

"Take a course and try it out. Also, for anyone in Oklahoma who is interested in volunteering in a field school there are many opportunities. You can even come out to the field school that I was on in Israel. It doesn't matter your age; you can go out and help at a field school. You don't have to have a degree. You just have to be interested in it," she said.

She said she has relied on her faith throughout these challenges that she has faced.

"If there is anything I have learned throughout this entire ordeal, with the COVID pandemic and cancellations, it's patience and let go and let God. It's been a lot of learning."

McGowan drafted by Phillies

By Shelia Kirven

Christian McGowan, 21, was recently drafted by the Philadelphia Phillies in the seventh round of the 2021 Major League Baseball Draft.

Originally from Bokchito, Oklahoma, and a 2018 Rock Creek High School graduate, the 6'3", 205-pound right-hand pitcher attended Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton, Oklahoma. He was scouted in the summer of 2020 and given the opportunity to transfer to Kansas State but chose to stay at EOSC. He also played for the Waterloo Bucks in Waterloo,

Iowa, in a summer league.

A pitcher throwing in the high 90s, he has earned the title of "flame-throwing righty" with his 97m throws.

McGowan was a 2021 NJCAA Division 1 Pre-Season All-American and recorded as being the number two junior college prospect in the country on July 1, on prepbaseballreport.com. He is currently in Clearwater, Florida, at his first-ever Phillies training camp.

McGowan is the son of Stephanie Carlton and Chris McGowan.



Photo Provided

CNHSA welcomes new interns

Name: Zachary R. Cruse

Hometown: Edmond, Oklahoma.

Medical School: Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine

Interests: Rural and wilderness medicine, Obstetrical care, Pediatrics, Chronic respiratory diseases.

Future Plans: Practice in Southeastern Oklahoma.



Name: Shanell Ann Gray

Hometown: Inola, Oklahoma

Medical school: Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine

Interests: Rural medicine, Osteopathic Manipulative Medicine

Future plans: My hope is to have a private practice in rural Oklahoma and establish clinics and hospitals in impoverished areas of the world.



Name: Henry Gutierrez

Hometown: Cedarville Arkansas

Medical School: Arkansas college of Osteopathic Medicine (ARCOM)

Interests: Various procedures and seeing the entire family.

Future Plans: Possibly wound care.



Name: Patrick McIntosh
Hometown: Bristow and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Medical School: Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine

Interests: Preventative care and improving quality of life.

Future Plans: Yet to be determined.



Name: Daniel Stacy

Hometown: Poteau, Oklahoma

Medical School: Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine

Interests: Everything

Future Plans: Do a little bit of everything.



Deputy Walt Mazar saves a life



Photo Provided

Deputy Walt Mazar was presented the Napa Sheriff Office's Lifesaving Medal in July, after saving the life of a young woman.

By Shelia Kirven

Deputy Walt Mazar, formerly of California's Napa County Sheriff's Department, recently saved the life of a young woman who had suffered major injury after becoming caught in a boat propeller. Mazar responded to an emergency call on June 27, 2021, at California's Lake Berryessa, whereby a female swimmer had been trapped underneath a rental boat and was struggling to stay afloat, with her body and legs severely wounded. Because the party she was with was not familiar with the lake, her exact location was not known. After a land and water search did not prove successful, Deputy Mazar expanded his search, going out in

a boat alone to continue looking for the woman. He located and found her. Mazar pulled the woman into the boat he had been using for the search and with the help of bystanders applied pressure to her major wounds, while rushing her to a location where awaiting first responders transported her to a local trauma center.

Deputy Mazar was presented the Napa Sheriff's Lifesaving Medal on July 3, 2021.

He recently retired after 28 years in law enforcement in California. He and his wife, Rebel, have recently relocated to Oklahoma.

Mazar is the son of Walter and Vivian Mazar of McAlester, Oklahoma, and the grandson of James and Margaret Anderson of Wilburton, Oklahoma.

VIRTUAL EVENT

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NOVEMBER 4, 2021

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Choctaw Nation Health Services

Name: Patrick McIntosh
Hometown: Bristow and Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Medical School: Oklahoma State University College of Osteopathic Medicine

Interests: Preventative care and improving quality of life.

Future Plans: Yet to be determined.

Name: Daniel Stacy

Hometown: Poteau, Oklahoma

Medical School: Arkansas College of Osteopathic Medicine

Interests: Everything

Future Plans: Do a little bit of everything.



James Dry

District 9

Halito from District 9,

It's been very busy over the summer in District 9. On June 17, we held our District 9 Princess Pageant. This year, Senior Miss Haleigh Gibson, Junior Miss Kenzie Wilson and Little Miss Kiree Lewis represent our district. We are very proud of them and all the other young ladies who participated in this year's pageant.

We recently opened the Cultural Center to the public, and it's been a tremendous success for the Choctaw Nation. I would like to personally thank the staff for all the hard work and dedication to ensure a great grand opening. I want to say a special Yakoke to Sue Folsom for her life-long commitment to preserving our culture and traditions.

Our Casino Sky Tower opened on August 5 to the public! This has been almost a 2-year project, and the expansion

has created over 1,000 jobs. It is now one of the top casinos in the United States. We had several volunteers from across the Choctaw Nation help work over the opening weekend, and we appreciate them very much. I would like to also thank the casino staff for all the hard work you put in every day and night to make our property one of the best in the U.S.

Chief, Assistant Chief, SEOs and Tribal Council have been working on plans for the American Rescue Plan and applications for our elder food cards rolled out in mid-August. We have been waiting on federal guidelines to move forward with other disbursements. Other applications from the ARPA fund will be rolling out in September.

I'm also proud to announce we had 21 kids receive a \$1,000 District 9 scholarship this year through our Chahta Foundation. We raise money each year through golf tournaments, private donations and taco sales. This fundraising allows us to give additional scholarships each year. Education has always been very important to me, and I know my grandfather Ernest Dry and great uncle Aaron Dry would be proud to know others are "dreaming big and chasing dreams."

Congratulations to two of our seniors who are so deserving of being honored and recognized. Darryl Williams and Marilyn Mitchell were elected by their peers to represent District 9 as its "Outstanding Elders for 2021". These two have each led extraordinary lives while raising their families and always helping others. We hope they will be chosen to represent the Choctaw Nation as its "Distinguished Elders 2021" later this year.

It's been a great pleasure to serve the Choctaw Nation and District 9 the past four years, and I'm very honored to have another four years. I'm truly blessed, and I'll keep working hard to do what's best for the Choctaw Nation and District 9. Please feel free to contact me anytime at james.dry@choctawnation.com. God Bless!



Photo provided

Councilman James Dry poses for a photo with the 2021-2022 District 9 Choctaw Royalty, Senior Miss Haleigh Gibson, Little Miss Kiree Lewis and Junior Miss Kenzie Wilson.

Choctaw Country Market launches Market Curbside + Delivery

DURANT, Okla., (August 12, 2021) – Choctaw Country Market recently announced the launch of Market Curbside + Delivery. Convenient and accessible, Market Curbside + Delivery provides a contact-free, online ordering, delivery-to-car and delivery to home shopping experience, now available at all Country Market locations. (Located in Clayton, Boswell and Coalgate, Oklahoma)

"Market Curbside + Delivery service has been one of the most important initiatives our team has worked on," states Icy Conn, Executive Director of Commerce Retail Operations. "There are many food deserts in southeastern Oklahoma and our goal is that every community member should have access to affordable, healthy fresh food. We hope this initiative will provide more options for our customers."

Curbside orders are available at all Choctaw Country Market locations, every day 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Orders are assembled with care and delivered directly to customer's cars to provide a contactless experience. Local customers can order online at <https://www.choctawcountrymarket.com> and shop from a wide selection of products. Customers select a 30-minute window for contactless curbside pickup.

Home delivery is free in surrounding Country Market locations for a limited time with a \$50 purchase and a \$5 delivery fee on purchases under \$50. Additional fees may be included to service locations outside of the local area. Delivery drivers will leave all orders at the customer's doorstep. Customers will then be contacted when the delivery arrives.

Home Delivery is offered on the following days from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.:

Boswell: Tuesday and Friday

Clayton: Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday

Coalgate: Monday, Thursday and Saturday

Quinton: Wednesday

Talihina: Tuesday and Thursday

Market Rewards is Choctaw Country Market's newest loyalty program. Earn points and savings on products throughout the three stores. The more you shop, the more rewards you earn.

For more information on Choctaw Country Market Curbside + Delivery visit, <https://www.choctawcountrymarket.com>

Choctaw Country Markets are a one-stop shop for patrons, featuring a full-service grocery store and gas station. Choctaw Country Markets are an Oklahoma-based business that supports local families, businesses and communities. There are three country markets throughout Southeast Oklahoma, with plans to open several more in the coming years. Staying true to the Choctaw heritage, the market features murals depicting cultural aspects of the Choctaw Nation. For more information, please visit <https://choctawcountrymarket.com>.



Anthony Dillard

District 10

Halito, Chim Achukma from District 10. I am truly humbled and honored to be re-elected by you, the people, for another term as Tribal Council. This summer has truly flown by, and at present, we are being reminded again that we are still going through a pandemic as the Covid-19 cases continue to rise. I encourage everyone to exercise caution as we continue to navigate this ongoing health crisis.

We had several grand openings to celebrate in July! The new Hugo Laundry Facility centralized laundry services for all gaming hotel operations. It also provided 23 new job opportunities, increasing the workforce to 45. The new Cultural Center in Durant is a must-see! It tells the story of our Choctaw journey and our history. I want to give a big shout-out to our culture keepers that

worked for many years, bringing this experience to us to enjoy, learn and appreciate for years to come. Yakoke! We also had the grand opening of the Durant Casino and Resort expansion. It is truly a first-class project, and I encourage everyone to visit. A highlight I would suggest is touring the property and seeing the new Choctaw artwork featured throughout the property. I am very proud to have Choctaw artists showcased in our new facility. The art complements the designs very well.

One of the projects that I want to encourage interest in for the tribe to pursue is sustainability for our sovereign territory. I know I'm looking into regenerative agriculture for my farm and ranch for forage production and better practices to encourage soil health. Choctaw ranches are working toward best practices for our cattle. I'm encouraged that we made an equity investment into a processing plant to help satisfy local food supply issues we often encounter. The processing plant helps to satisfy the meat aspect of the food chain with hopes to encourage more fruit and vegetable aspects of food sovereignty for our area.

As all of this relates to taking care of our area and our future reliance on the utilities, electric, gas, and even broadband internet connectivity, we must continue to strive to ensure that we have the capacity to take care of our area and ensure our destiny.

I would like to give a big shout-out to our own District 10 senior fitness team for retaining the traveling trophy for winning the senior fitness challenge again for 2021. Congratulations! Yakoke!



Robert Karr

District 11

Halito chim achukma! I hope you had a terrific summer. There is no place I had rather live than on the Choctaw Nation reservation. We have had some great achievements for our tribe lately with the opening of our Cultural Center and the Casino/Resort. Also, we had some setbacks with the reemergence of Covid, but the Chahta spirit is resilient and will stay strong.

I am proud of our tribe and truly believe that we have a bright future. If you have not visited the Cultural Center, please make plans to, you will not be disappointed. Our businesses have done very well and with the addition of the beautiful new resort and casino, I think it will help us continue to serve our tribal members for generations.

The District 11 princess pageant was held June 24.

All the contestants did an awesome job. Congratulations to our new princesses Little Miss Sophia McFarland, Junior Miss Jenessa Dugger and Senior Miss Madison Ward. Yakoke to our 2019-2021 princesses Jordyn Washington, Alexis Futscha and Chey-homma Duger for representing District 11 so very well.

I would also like to announce the Chahta Foundation District 11 Scholarship recipients for 2021, Katie Barnes (Savanna), Erin Dunlap (McAlester), Bruce Holloway (Haileyville), Rowdy Nimrod (Hartshorne), Taylor Stufflebean (Hartshorne) and Ravyn Surginer (McAlester). We wish these young people the best in their educational pursuits.

Our senior lunches started back in July for three weeks before the rise in Covid cases caused us to go back to curbside. We had great attendance for all three weeks. It was nice for Chief Patton and Asst. Chief Austin to join us on the first Wednesday lunch and speak to our group. July 28 was the Veteran Appreciation Dinner, where we honored the District 11 veterans with a steak dinner and gifts. Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma honors a veteran of the month at every regular session council meeting. In August, I had the pleasure of presenting Jack Haynes with the citation during the meeting. Jack served in the US Navy from 1969-1971 and worked on the extensive modernization of the USS Midway. He was a McAlester firefighter and retired from the McAlester Army Ammunition Plant. Jack is a Choctaw artist. His talents include woodcarving, beadwork and painting.

The 2021 Outstanding Elders from District 11 are Vivian Mazar and Clem Santine. Vivian is such a wonderful person and enjoyable to be around. She is always smiling and has such a positive attitude. Clem is a successful Choctaw businessman as a long-time State Farm Agent in McAlester. He serves his clients with professionalism and helps with civic groups and charities. Both Vivian and Clem are good examples for our Choctaw young people on how education and hard work can lead to a successful life.

We have over six hundred Choctaw business owners that participate in the Choctaw Small Business Development Chahtapreneur program. August 10 was the Chahtapreneur awards dinner. Congratulations to the 2021 Business of the year for District 11 Grayson Smedley of Precision Tree & Landscapes in McAlester.

Yakoke for allowing me to serve as your Council member, it is a great honor. If I can help you or your family in any way, please let me know. Together We're More!

Chihowa vt achukma,

Robert Karr

MEALS TO-GO PROGRAM

FUNDED BY THE USDA

The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority's initiative is to serve free meals to all kids under the age of 18; CDIB is not required. Recipients will drive-through the relative locations to pickup their meal and/or snack. The Meals To-Go program is offered at 11 sites throughout the Choctaw Nation.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

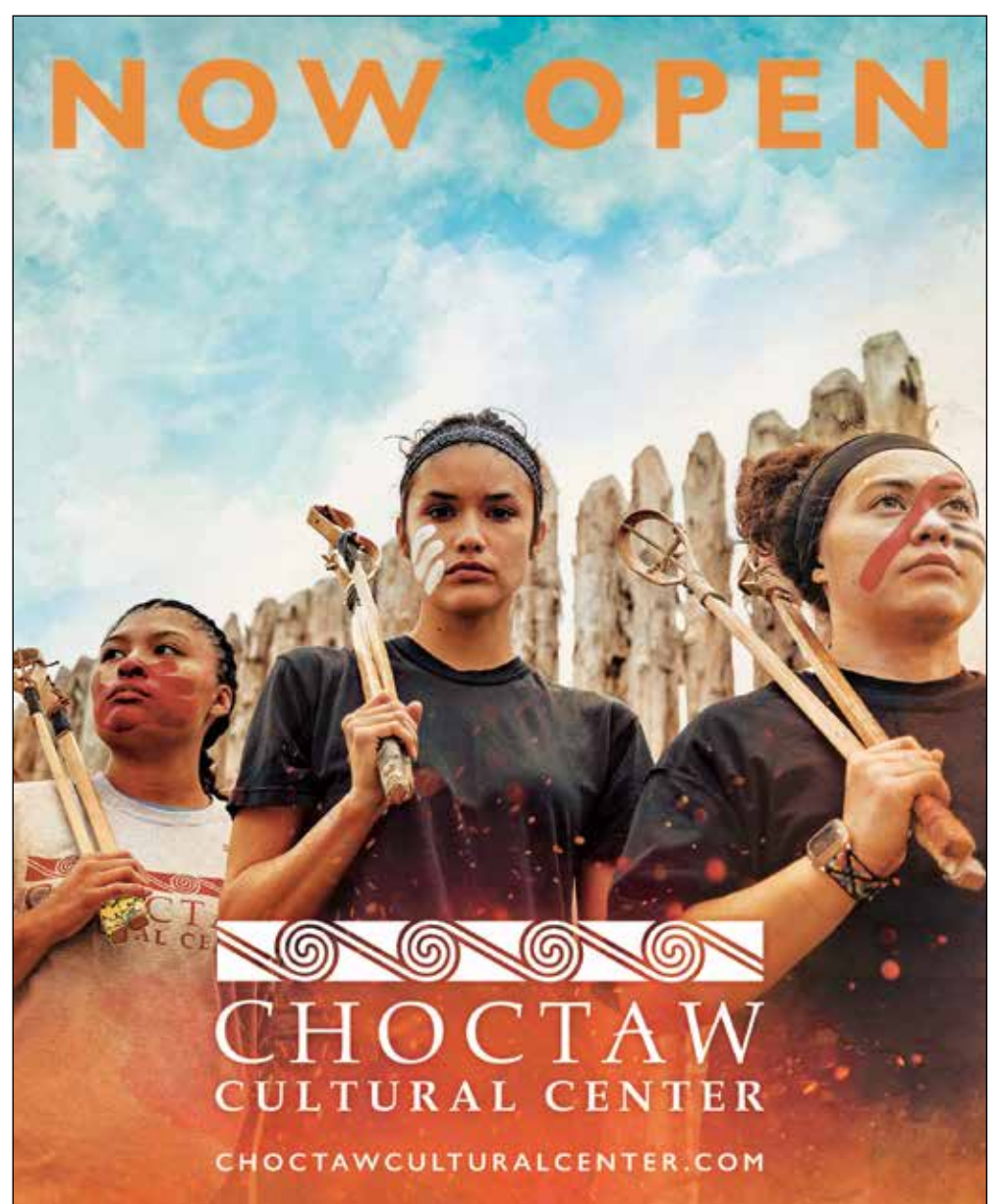



CASTING CALL

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

HAVE QUESTIONS? EMAIL [MULTIMEDIA@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:multimedia@choctawnation.com)

TO COMPLETE THE CASTING CALL FORM, VISIT WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CASTING-CALL





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 Vocational Rehabilitation

| | | |
|--------------|-------------|---------------------|
| September 7 | Idabel | 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. |
| September 8 | Antlers | 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. |
| September 10 | Atoka | 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. |
| September 10 | Coalgate | 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. |
| September 14 | Wright City | 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. |
| September 15 | Stigler | By Appointment |
| September 17 | Crowder | By Appointment |
| September 21 | Broken Bow | 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. |
| September 22 | Poteau | 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. |
| September 24 | Atoka | 8 a.m. - 11 a.m. |
| September 24 | Coalgate | 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. |
| September 29 | Wilburton | 10:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. |

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

YAKOKE

On behalf of the Kirkes family, I would like to thank the Choctaw tribe and the Honor Guard for the beautiful funeral services held for Harold (Buddy) Kirkes. The services were held at the Choctaw Veterans Cemetery on August 7th. It was appreciated very much.

Jerry Kirkes

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:

Bethel Community Center
September 24, 2021
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.



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Choctaw Nation Children & Family Services

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Circulation Department
580.924.8280 x4028

Read the Biskinik online at
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/NEWS



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
Monthly Publication
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.

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION AGENDA August 14, 2021

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
3. ROLL CALL
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a. Regular Session July 10, 2021
5. WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
 - a. Veteran of the Month—Jack Hayes, District #11
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS
 - a. Wayne Cotton, Individual—Choctaw Medical Centers/System
 - b. Faith Parra, Individual—Serving & Protecting Choctaw Citizens in Oklahoma
 - c. Nellie Meashintubby, Individual—Meeting the Needs of Chahta Tribal Citizens
 - d. Isaac Sexton, Individual—Burial Benefits
 - e. Kristin Franklin, Individual—Acceptance into the Tribe
7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
8. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Letter of Re-Appointment for Judge David Burrage as Chief Justice for Choctaw Nation Tribal Court. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - b. Letter of Appointment for Judge Warren Gotcher as District Court Appellate Judge for the Choctaw Nation Judicial Branch Court of Appeals. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Passed
 - c. Approve Business Lease G09-1996 in Favor of Bill Black on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - d. Approve Recreational Lease No. G09-1983 in Favor of Wade Batchelor on Land Held by the USA in Trust for the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations in McCurtain County, Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - e. Approve the Application for the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program Grant. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - f. Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets. Vote Counts: Nay's - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill did not pass
 - g. Approve Funding for an Equity Investment in a Restaurant to be Located in Atoka, Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - h. Enact the Claims and Immunities Act of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - i. Approve the Expenditure of Fiscal Relief Fund Monies Received from the United States Department of the Treasury under the American Rescue Plan Act. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
 - j. Amend the Choctaw Nation Traffic Code. Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
9. OTHER NEW BUSINESS
10. OLD BUSINESS
 - a. Approval of the Creation of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Conservation District (Tabled on 7/10/21). Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: Bill passed
11. ADJOURNMENT
12. CLOSING PRAYER

All Council members were present



Where to Hike in Choctaw Country

Take a stroll through Broken Bow, Robbers Cave, and more.

CHOCTAWCOUNTRY.COM

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna September Language Lesson

Chike

'Chike' is a future tense emphatic, contracted from *chì hoke*, and is used to *purpose* in a mild manner; to be hereafter; it will be so. We are familiar with the leave-taking expression "Chi pisa la chike" - I will be seeing you/See you later. The following are example sentences commonly spoken.

1. Vm vlhtahakma impa la chike.
I will eat when I am ready.
2. Onnakma chi afama la chike.
I will meet you tomorrow.
3. Chipokni ish pisa chike.
You (be sure) to see your grandmother.
4. Vllqsi i holbvttoaba ish sv pisacha chike.
You (be sure) and show me the baby's photos.
5. Impvt il ia chike.
We (shall) will go eat.
6. Chi chukka il ona chike.
We will come to your house.
7. Il ittafama chike.
We (shall) will meet.
8. Chahta Im Ayohmohmi Cinta yvt tiwa tuk, hvsh aiona chike.
The Choctaw Cultural Center opened, you all (be sure) and go.
9. Miko yvt anumpula chì hatuk osh hvsh hakla chike.
The Chief will speak so you all be sure to listen.
10. Iskvli pota li kash falvmint chima la chike.
I will repay the money I borrowed from you.

www.choctawschool.com

Cheyhoma Dugger graduates with Masters from Northeastern



Cheyhoma Dugger is a recent graduate from Northeastern State University. She graduated in 2021 with her master's in business administration with an emphasis in Native American enterprises. She was awarded the Academic Achievement Award for the MBA program. The award honors the top student in that program. She graduated from Northeast-

ern State University in 2019 with her Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting. She was selected as one of the Top 10 Outstanding Seniors in 2019 and was also named the Jack Kaufman Senior of Distinction that year. In 2019, she was also a recipient of the American Indian Merit Award. Before her 2021 commencement, Cheyhoma accepted the Director of Development and Membership position at the new Choctaw Cultural Center.

While at Northeastern State, Cheyhoma served on the Council for the Native American Student Association and worked at the NSU Native American Support Center as a student mentor. She served as the Coordinator for the Miss Native American NSU Competition and would go on to serve as the program advisor for a year. She also has had the pleasure of serving as Senior Miss Choctaw Nation 2019-2021 for District 11.

"I will forever be grateful to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for their support through their many programs and services. I am looking forward to using the knowledge I have gained through my education and experience to serve the Choctaw people."

Dandridge completes MLS at Truman Medical Center



James Denis "J.D." Dandridge completed the Medical Lab Scientist (MLS) Program at Truman Medical Center in Kansas City, Missouri, in May of 2021 and passed the ASCP Board Certification exam. J.D. graduated from the University of Kansas in 2019 with a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology and will be

working at Truman Medical Center in the Core Lab.

J.D. would like to thank the Choctaw Nation Higher Education and Career Development programs for all their assistance.

J.D. is the grandson of Frank Dandridge of Augusta, Kansas. He is the son of Shawn and Lisa Dandridge of Shawnee, Kansas, and the brother to Emma Dandridge of Kansas City, Missouri.

Bradford receives doctorate



Keri Bradford has received her doctoral degree in education at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Keri is employed as the American Indian Student Services Coordinator at UC, Santa Barbara.

Keri's dissertation entitled "The Higher Education Experiences of Native American Students: A Qualitative Study of Historical Trauma, Identity, and Institutional Support" includes a thank you to the Choctaw Nation and education programs in the acknowledgment section and states (in part) "Yakoke chito — many thanks to the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for continuously supporting my education and career growth. I especially thank Miko Gregory Pyle and Miko Gary Batton, the Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program and Larry Wade, and the Choctaw Nation Career Development program and counselor Stacy Hallmark."

Keri has authored or co-authored numerous articles and publications and is the recipient of numerous awards. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the United American Indian Involvement, Inc. organization and plans to continue her research and work at the university.

Keri is shown in her PhD regalia and is wearing a traditional Choctaw dress made by her now 96-year old grandmother. Keri wore the same dress at her high school graduation.

Augustus Scott Airington



Augustus (Gus) Scott Airington was born weighing 7.2 pounds on June 14, 2021, at 4:23 a.m. in Talihina, Oklahoma.

Parents are Bobby John and Alicia (Ally Coyle) Airington. Grandparents are James Garland and Patsy (Walker) Airington and Rodney and Donnie (Barnard) Coyle.

All-State for Austin Hunt



Austin Hunt was selected to the 2021 Native Oklahoma All-State Basketball team.

Austin is from Velma, Oklahoma. He is the grandson of Eddie Dean Barker, and the great-grandson of the

late Loeta Sims Hays. Austin was named the valedictorian of the Velma-Alma Class of 2021. He also received a scholarship to be a part of the President's Leadership Class at the University of Oklahoma in Fall 2021.

Austin will attend OU to receive his MBA, and then he plans to attend OU law school.



Wilson graduates from UChicago

Katherine Wilson graduated from the University of Chicago in June, receiving a Bachelor of Science Degree in biology.

She played four years on the UChicago volleyball team, and as a student athlete, she received All Conference Academic Team, All Conference Honorable Mention, and All Conference Athlete of the Week.

Apart from her studies at UChicago, she also served on the board of her school's Fellowship of Christian Athletes, and spent time as a volunteer at the Comer Children's Hospital.

Always passionate about good health, the COVID-19 pandemic has only hardened Wilson's resolve to seek a career where she can help others. That in mind, she is applying to medical school, with plans to start in the fall of 2022.

Glilton earns masters degree

Kimberly Gilton graduated with a master's in communication from Grand Canyon University in October, 2020.

She is grateful for all the support from her family, friends and the Nation.

"It was an amazing journey and I feel blessed," said Gilton.



Davis Ryan Tidmore



Davis Ryan Tidmore was born on June 2, 2021, at 4:37 a.m., weighing 6 lbs and 15 oz. at St. Lukes Hospital in Chesterfield, Missouri.

He is the son of Daniel R. and Bekah Tidmore of Vulcan, Missouri.

He is the grandson of Terry and Becki Tidmore of Midwest City, Oklahoma and Mark and (the late) Shelly Russell of Evansville, Indiana.

Dandridge graduates

Emma Nichole Dandridge graduated from the University of Kansas School of Nursing in May of 2021. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Nursing and will be working in the Emergency Department at Truman Medical Center in Kansas City, Missouri.

Emma would like to thank the Choctaw Nation Higher Education and Career Development programs for all their assistance and for helping her reach her goal. Emma is the granddaughter of Frank Dandridge of Augusta, Kansas, the daughter of Shawn and Lisa Dandridge of Shawnee, Kansas, and the sister to James Dandridge of Overland Park, Kansas.



Jones graduates from MIT



Connor Jones graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering June 4, 2021.

Upon graduation, Connor will join the international management consulting firm, Oliver Wyman. He will be based in the Dallas, Texas office.

Connor would like to thank the Choctaw Nation and his family for their continued support throughout his education.

His grandparents are Frank Jones of Bennington, Oklahoma, Mary Drown of Phoenix, Arizona, and Joe and Denise Henderson of Frisco, Texas. Connor's parents are Ron and Royce Jones, and his sister is Peyton Jones of Richardson, Texas.

Braswell graduates with honors



Layne Thomas Braswell of McAlester, Oklahoma, graduated with honors from Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas, May 7, 2021.

He received a Bachelor of Science Degree in environmental science. While at Haskell, he played on the golf team and was involved with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) and Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru).

He is one of 30 college students from across the country, serving with the Badlands Summer Mission through Cru in Medora, North Dakota. He will return to Lawrence, Kansas, in August.

Layne would like to thank the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for their support over the past four years.

Layne is the son of Ryan and Christina Braswell, and the grandson of Tom and Shirley Braswell, and Lloyd and Elizabeth Wold, all of McAlester, Oklahoma.



Spor graduates from OU

Chloe McKenzie Spor recently graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a bachelor's degree in world language education.

Folsom Taylor celebrates 100 years



Maxine Folsom Taylor recently celebrated her milestone 100th birthday. She is the granddaughter of Dan Folsom, who, according to her family, was the last living member of the Light-horse Riders, and he also

served as the personal bodyguard to Chief Green McCurtain. Family and friends held a birthday party for her on July 30, 2021.

Flores graduates University of Texas School of Law



Ceirra Leann Flores has graduated from the University of Texas School of Law in Austin, Texas.

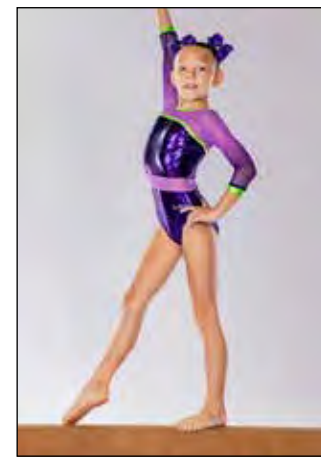
She is the great-granddaughter of Doris Richison.

Ceirra started her educational journey at North Central University in Minnesota after she graduated from Owasso High School in 2011.

She finished her undergraduate work at the University of Oklahoma, where she earned her Bachelor of Arts in linguistics and Bachelor of Science in literature. From there, she won a fellowship to study law at the University Of Texas, where she finished in the top 5% of her class.

Ceirra will be employed by Hudson, a global corporate immigration law firm, where she is the Legal and Creative Writing Director focusing on immigration and refugee status of applicants becoming U.S. citizens.

Alyson McNeely earns All-State



Alyson McNeely, age 10, received second place in her floor routine and placed at the advanced state meet in Norman, Oklahoma.

This qualified Alyson for the All-State banquet and the title of All-State Gymnast.

Alyson scored a 36 or better at two meets this season and will compete in the nationals in Savannah, Georgia, at the end of June. Alyson is not only an All-State gymnast, but she is also extremely talented in archery.

She attends McAlester Elite Gymnastics Academy and is on the AAU Gold team.



Lavan retires

Joseph R. Lavan, Chief Maritime Enforcement Specialist, retired from the U.S. Coast Guard after 20 years of service from July 2001-2021.

Joseph has over nine years of time out to sea and has traveled around the world protecting the United States.

He has spent his career fighting the war on drugs, human trafficking, illicit activities and participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Joseph is currently stationed in Yorktown, Virginia, and will be returning to San Diego, California, to continue his career with the Department of Homeland Security. Joseph is also a decedent of George Washington Harkins.

"A special thank you to my wife Heidi, kids Ava, Olivia and William, parents Joe and Denise and sister Tiffany, family and Choctaw Nation for the support over the last 20 years."

Barnett graduates from West Texas A&M with honors



Sophia Barnett has graduated from West Texas A&M University with honors with a Bachelor of Science in computer science.

She started her journey at South Plains College, where she earned an Associate of Science degree in computer science.

Barnett said, "The Choctaw Nation Higher Education program has helped me pay tuition for several years, and for that, I want to say thank you."

She is currently waiting for a background check to be completed before starting a job with the Department of Justice in New Mexico.

Evans receives Doctorate of Physical Therapy from SBU



Bailey Ryan Evans graduated with her Doctorate in physical therapy from Southwest Baptist University in Bolivar, Missouri, on May 15, 2021.

Ryan is a graduate of Union High School in Tulsa and received her bachelor's degree in health and exercise science from the University of Oklahoma in 2018.

Ryan will specialize in cancer recovery and orthopedic physical therapy. She will begin her practice at PT Central Saint Anthony's North in Oklahoma City in June.

Ryan is very grateful to the Choctaw Nation for their support throughout her school career.

Roberts inducted to Oklahoma Football Coaches Power Lifting Hall of Fame

Kerry Roberts, retired administrator, educator and football coach, was recently inducted into the Oklahoma Football Coaches Powerlifting Hall of Fame. Only four individuals have been historically inducted.

Roberts was due to be inducted in 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was rescheduled for March 2021. A native of the Ardmore, Oklahoma area, Roberts was a 1975 graduate of Plainview High School. He currently lives in Tonkawa.

Roberts received his bachelor's and master's degrees from East Central University in Ada. He went on to teach American and Oklahoma history and coach football. He was the head football coach at Wilson, Comanche, Eufaula and Madill schools. He saw his teams win three state championships in powerlifting, two at Comanche and one at Eufaula.

During the last 14 years of his career in the public school system, he was Assistant Principal at Eufaula and Madill, where he also coached.

To be inducted into the Oklahoma Football Coaches Powerlifting Hall of Fame, one must have contributed to OFBCA (OK Football Coaches Association) Powerlifting. The organization began in the early 2000s, and Roberts was



a founding member. He was also the second president of the association. To qualify, one must also be a member of the football association.

The Oklahoma Football Coaches Powerlifting association represents around 200 schools in Oklahoma that participate. Roberts says the association is very competitive and has grown tremendously, becoming one of the bigger sports in Oklahoma. He says he is very proud to have been on the ground floor when it started.



Grace Wilson graduates

Grace Virginia Wilson recently graduated from the College of New Jersey with a bachelor's degree in urban education, elementary education and mathematics.

Grace also earned the highest Latin Honors, graduating Summa Cum Laude. Grace would like to thank the Choctaw Nation's Higher Education Program for the financial assistance they have provided to her throughout her college years. Grace plans on completing one more year of school to complete her Master's in Urban Education.

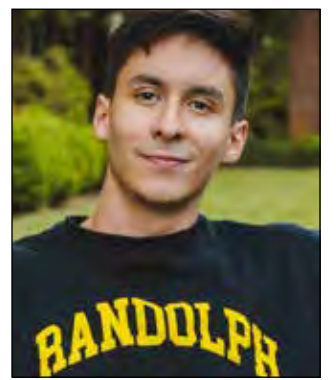
Grace is the granddaughter of Isaac "JR" Wilson. Her parents are Glenn and Lisa Wilson.

Harrison graduates with B.A.

Elijah David Harrison graduated from Randolph College in Lynchburg, Virginia, with a bachelor's in psychology in May 2021. Elijah received the highest award for his department, the Frank Murray Award for Outstanding Senior Research.

He has already been accepted into the University of Lynchburg's highly rated MBA program and awarded a distinguished Graduate Assistantship in the Bonner Leadership Program.

Elijah is grateful for the continued support the Choctaw Nation provides for his academic pursuits.



Haynes named August Veteran of the Month



Jack Haynes, a resident of District 11, is Choctaw Nation's Veteran of the month for August.

Haynes served in the United States Navy from June 1969 to May 1971, where he achieved the rank of E4 3rd Class Petty Officer.

He was stationed aboard the USS Midway CVA41 aircraft carrier and worked on the extensive modernization of the carrier at the Naval Shipyard, from which it was recommissioned on Jan. 31, 1970.

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

Angela Roberts graduates



Angela Roberts graduated in May 2021 with superintendent's honors for her associate degrees in sociology, psychology, and social and behavioral science.

She would like to thank the Choctaw Nation Higher Education Department for its financial assistance. She also wants to thank her family for all their love and support.

Angela is transferring to the University of California Merced to continue her education.

Angela is the great-granddaughter of the late Lesa Phillip-Roberts and Jessie Roberts.

Mayo July Veteran of the Month

Jack Mayo, Sherman, Texas, was June's Veteran of the Month. Mayo is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation and an active member of the Choctaw Community Center in District 9.

He served in the United States Air Force from 1950 to 1955. He was stationed at Highwickham, England and played tuba in the Air Force Band in England and Roswell, New Mexico.

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.



Sterling Malcolm Pool



David and Darla Pool are proud to announce the arrival of their first grandbaby, Sterling Malcolm Pool, on April 15, 2021.

He weighed 7 lb, 11 oz and was 19 3/4 inches long.

His parents are Lucas Pool and Autumn Long of Waco, Texas.

McCleary earns her Master's

April Sioux (Lowe) McCleary MSN, RN, RN-BC, graduated from Vanguard University of Southern California with a Master of Science degree in nursing with an emphasis on leadership and education.

April graduated with Summa Cum Laude, highest honors, all while working full-time as a registered nurse on the front-line during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

April would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for the gracious gift of grants and scholarships she received as monetary support throughout her education. April would also like to thank her husband Jason McCleary, parents Roger and Julie Lowe, and Diane and George Cone, as well as her extended family and friends for the unending prayers and support. Finally, April gives thanks to the Lord for, without His strength and grace, none of this could be possible.



Cobb crowned Peach Princess



Raylein Cobb was crowned Peach Princess July 17, 2021, in Stratford, Oklahoma.

Raylein's grandparents are Rebecka and Chuck Casey of Ada, Okla. and Rebecca and Eddie Cobb of Kingston, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of Logan and Christen Cobb.

95 years for Inez Beal



Inez Beal Cowling celebrated her 95th birthday on July 19, 2021, surrounded by 70 family members from all over the country.

Inez was born and raised in Oklahoma and currently lives in Bakersfield, California.

She is the daughter of William Turner Beal and Mary Caroline Beal, formerly of Bentley, Oklahoma.

McAbee graduates from Tech

Christopher McAbee graduated with a sports management degree from Texas Tech University.

Christopher plans to pursue a Master's degree at Texas Tech and Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

He is thankful for the support he received from the Choctaw Nation, his grandparents, Don and Carol Browning of Talihina, Oklahoma, and countless family members.



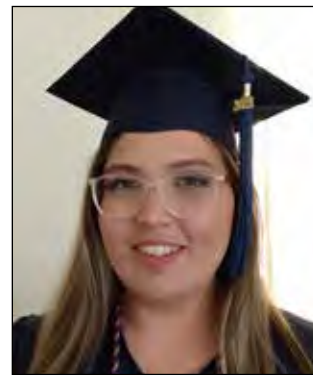
Kim Roberts graduates

Kim Roberts graduated in May 2021 with an associate degree in health science and an Associate Degree for Transfer in elementary teacher education with honors.

Kim would like to express her appreciation to God for her life and to the Choctaw Nation for their support during this last year and with the higher education funds that have made this graduation possible.

She gives a special thank you to her family for being so supportive, and she also wants to express her appreciation to her ancestors and those who have passed this life but left a lasting impression on her own life.

Kim is the great-granddaughter of the late Lesa Phillip-Roberts and Jessie Roberts.



Reed graduates from UT



Alexia Reed graduated University of Texas with a Bachelor Science and Arts in human development and family science with a minor in disability studies. Alexia also earned a Bridging Disciplines certificate in children and society with a concentration of intervention and vulnerable children.

Alexia thanks the Choctaw Nation for their help in getting her degree.

Mary Wood celebrates 99 years

Mary Norman Wood celebrated her 99th birthday June 16. She is hoping to announce in June 2022 that she has reached the milestone of 100 years.

Mary is the granddaughter of Ida Stanley Norman and daughter of Alvy Norman, who were original Dawes enrollees.

Mary is still active, plays bridge, and lives in her home. She enjoys being with her two sons, daughter-in-law, three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Morris commits to Stanford



Jack Morris has committed to play soccer for Stanford University.

Jack has spent his time since graduating high school playing for select, U17 and U19 teams. During high school, Jack had the opportunity to play for Minnesota Thunder Academy (a US Soccer Developmental Academy), Minnesota United U17 Team, train with the Minnesota United MLS Professional Team and the Portland Timbers U19 Team and train with the Timbers 2 professional team.

Jack was able to maintain a 3.98 GPA while attending three different high schools in four years and occasionally living with host families while playing for the development teams.

Jack will study Management, Science and Engineering while at Stanford,

Jack's parents are Ryan and Karen Morris of Eau Claire, Wisconsin. His grandmother is Pat Dill of Duncan, Oklahoma.

Crouch graduates from UCO



Madilyn Paige Scott Crouch graduated University of Central Oklahoma (UCO) as a Registered Nurse, B.S.N.

Madilyn graduated with two stoles, one for being in the Native American Association with UCO and one from the Choctaw Nation.

Madilyn also graduated with cords representing her 3.8 GPA, involvement in a research project on ovarian cancer cells, leadership, and involvement with a health project.

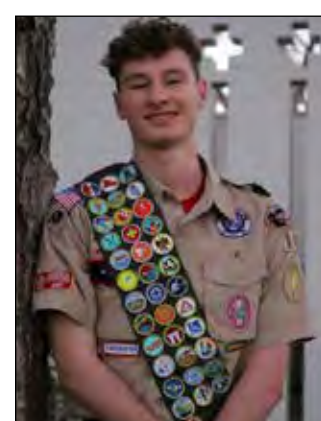
Madilyn was married to Stuart Crouch on July 30, 2020, after dating for three years. They were married in the Wichita Mountains outside of Lawton, Oklahoma.

Madilyn and Stuart will be moving to Houston, Texas, where Madilyn already has a position at the Women's Hospital of Texas on the Labor and Delivery Floor as a Nurse. Stuart will be an evangelist with the Deer Park Church of Christ.

Madilyn's mother is Amber Byrd Scott of Moore, Oklahoma, and her father and stepmother are Brian and Brandi Scott of Duncan, Oklahoma.

Madilyn is the granddaughter of Jerry and Sandy Byrd of Durant, Oklahoma and Sheri Amstutz of Yukon, Oklahoma.

Martin achieves the rank of Eagle Scout



Cole A. Martin of Lafayette, Louisiana, a member of Boy Scouts of America Troop 162, has earned the honor of Eagle Scout. Cole is a senior at Ascension Episcopal School.

Earning more than the required 21 merit badges, he earned silver, gold, and bronze palms, one for each of the five extra merit badges.

Cole's Eagle Scout project was to completely remove an entire depleted flower bed in front of the Episcopal Church of the Ascension. He added new soil, new shrubs, a French drain and trimmed the other landscaping in and around the Episcopal Church of the Ascension. He also added four concrete benches under the shade trees and pressure-washed and relocated four existing benches around the Columbarium. He was assisted by Troop 162 Scouts and Leaders and members of the church.

Cole has been very active with Troop 162 leadership positions and is also a member of the Order of the Arrow - the National Honor Society of the Boy Scouts of America. He has attended many out-of-state summer camps and numerous High Adventure trips. He also has attended the 2017 National Jamboree and the 2019 World Scout Jamboree held at Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia.

Cole is grateful to everyone who encouraged and mentored him on his journey from Tiger Cub to Eagle Scout.

PACE Program benefits both tribal and non-Tribal community

By Chris Jennings

For 10 years, the Choctaw Nation PACE Program has been helping tribal and non-tribal members take steps to a healthier lifestyle.

The PACE Program pays the entry fees for approved running and walking races, with the only requirement for membership being that you live within the Choctaw Nation. Those 70 and above can join the program even if they live outside of the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation.

The goal of PACE when it began was to promote a healthy lifestyle. Doris Winlock, Healthy Lifestyle Coordinator with the Choctaw Nation, said, “They wanted to develop a program to help promote physical activity in the community.”

One of the easiest ways to begin a journey to better health and regular exercise is to start walking. While PACE events are all mainly billed as running events, walking is common in them.



Billy Jones of Broken Bow, Okla., participated in the Sardis Dam 5k in June 2021. Billy has enjoyed running for 23 years, but this time was different. This year, Billy ran in honor of his late wife, Marcella, who passed away from COVID-19 in June 2020.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about half of all adults (48%) get enough aerobic physical activity to improve their health. Walking is the most popular physical activity, with about 6 in 10 adults walking at least 10 minutes the previous week.

“Hey, you got to start out walking. We can’t just get out there start running. So, we definitely promote walking as well as running,” said Winlock.

It’s taking the next step, though, where the PACE Program can help—that step of going from walking the dog to walking a mile in an event.

Often, being surrounded by like-minded people with the same goals will inspire someone to do better.

This encouragement and willingness to help is part of what being Choctaw is all about. “I truly believe that Choctaw Nation looks at this community as a family; we’re all in this together, we definitely want to help one another,” said Winlock.

Part of the guidelines to be a PACE member is to participate in at least one event every six months from your sign-on date. That was a hard goal to meet during the pandemic. The program continued, though, using virtual events to encourage people to get outside and complete their distances on their own.

The feedback on the virtual events was good, but some people still found it hard to complete them without the encouragement they received at an in-person event.

As things begin to shift back to being virtual, Winlock encourages people to continue to participate.

Virtual events are more convenient in that you have three days to complete them, and they can be done anywhere, such as a track, treadmill, park or zig-zagging through your neighborhood.

When you finish your virtual event, you can send photos or videos to dgwinlock@cnhsa.com for a chance to be shared on PACE social media.

A quick glance at past PACE event photos shows a wide variety of participants, from the young to the more experienced.

Randal Hicks, 81, received a doctor’s okay to take part in PACE events in 2015. Since then, he has completed at least 75 events, with 21 of these being in one year.

Hicks, a lifetime runner, says he likes to feel the wind blowing on him as he runs, but nowadays, he does it for health reasons. “I figure if I run a little and work out a little, it’ll keep me going,” said Hicks.

Hicks tells his wife his goal is to finish every race he starts. “I wouldn’t say I was going to crawl across the finish line, but I want to finish every race I start,” Hicks said with a chuckle.

When it comes to long-term health, goals are important.

One way to ensure you meet a smaller goal, such as participating in one event, is to create a larger goal that



Photos Provided

Randal Hicks, 81, from Broken Bow, Okla., participated in the Sardis Dam 5k. During the event, he stumbled and fell, but the only thing he was worried about was completing the race. Once cleared by medical staff, Hicks went on to finish the race, placing third in his age group.

requires completing smaller goals. That’s where the Runners Choice Challenge comes in.

The Runner’s Choice Challenge is a 10-run challenge where PACE members must complete 10 events a year. With PACE covering the registration costs of the event, all you have to do is show up.

One way to get motivated and keep that motivation for a larger goal, such as the 10-run challenge, is to encourage your friends and family members to complete the challenge with you.

There have been several instances where the program has helped tribal members and their friends and family take part in events where they would not have otherwise been able to participate together.

Winlock mentioned a family of five who, thanks to the virtual events, is now able to make the races a fun event for the whole family.

“It was difficult for them to participate in events together [because of the cost]. So they would split their family up in one event. Half of their family would be the cheering squad, as the other half was participating. Now with the PACE program, they are able to participate as a family, so they’re able to all sign up for an event, and nobody has to sit on the sidelines,” said Winlock.

Now, with over 2000 members actively taking part in events, the Choctaw Nation and the PACE Program have taken steps to improve the health of not just tribal members but the whole community within the Choctaw Nation.

If you know of an event that you would like to be included in the approved events list, you can urge them to apply to be part of the PACE Program. Applications to apply for the 2022 PACE schedule will be available online, September 1, 2021. Please visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/promoting-active-communities-everywhere-pace> for more information on the PACE Program.

September is Childhood Cancer Awareness Month

When a new parent has a sick child, it can be a tough experience. When that child is diagnosed with cancer, it can be devastating.

According to cancer.org, after accidents, cancer is the leading cause of death in children ages 1 to 14. It’s not all dire news though, even though cancer rates among children have been rising slightly in the past few decades, with continued major advances in treatment, 84% of children with cancer now survive five years or more.

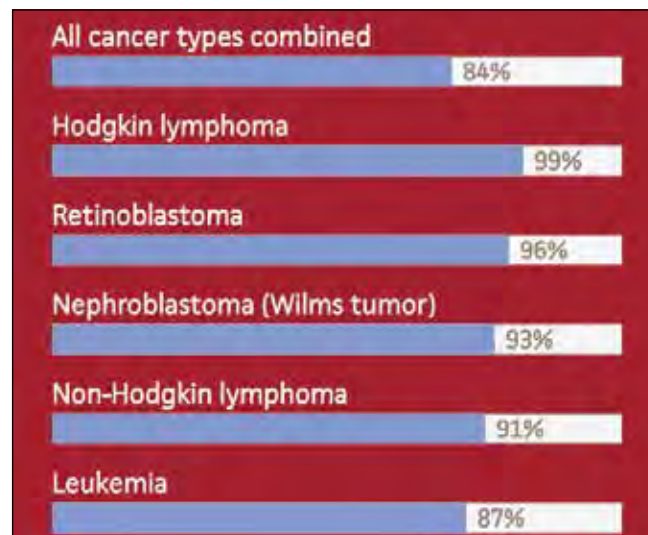
Leukemias are the most common cancer in children, accounting for about 28% of cancer diagnoses. They can cause bone and joint pain, fatigue, weakness, pale skin, bleeding or bruising, fever, weight loss, and other symptoms. Most of these symptoms can also be attributed to non-cancer-related illnesses or injuries.

Because many common illnesses or bumps and bruises can mask cancer symptoms, cancer in children can be hard to recognize immediately. Regular doctor visits and screening can help detect potential problems before they become bigger issues.

It’s important to have your child checked by a doctor if they have any unusual signs or symptoms that do not go away, such as:

- An unusual lump or swelling
- Unexplained paleness and loss of energy
- Easy bruising or bleeding
- Ongoing pain in one area of the body
- Limping
- Unexplained fever or illness that doesn’t go away
- Frequent headaches, often with vomiting
- Sudden eye or vision changes
- Sudden unexplained weight loss

It’s important to note that many of these symptoms are much more likely not to be cancer-related but seeing a doctor can help treat whatever the problem is.



cancer.org

The 5-year survival for childhood and adolescent cancer, 2010-2016, 0-14 years, by cancer types. Advances in technology have increased survival significantly.

| 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. |

Building Healthy Families Through Good Nutrition

WIC van travel has been postponed. If you need assistance, please call 580-380-3628 or 580-380-9895 Ext. 83582.

DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

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CHOCTAWNATION.COM/DPP

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

Open 8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday

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

September 2021

All markets open weekdays, September 1-27
Closed: September 28-30.

Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

ANTLERS 400 S.W. “O” ST., 580-298-6443

BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842

DURANT 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773

MCALESTER 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716

POTEAU 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Chicken Broccoli & Cheese Skillet

- 1 pound bonless, skinless chicken breast
- condensed cream of chicken soup
- 2 tsp oil
- 2 cups small shell pasta, uncooked
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 1/2 cups broccoli, fresh or frozen, chopped
- 1 cup chicken broth or stock (low-sodium)
- 1 cup low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 tsp garlic
- 1 can (10.5 oz)

Preparation

1. Cut chicken breast into bite size pieces. Cook in oil in medium skillet over medium-high heat until lightly browned, 2 to 3 minutes.
2. Add water, chicken broth or stock, soup, pepper and garlic to skillet.
3. Bring to a boil. Cover and reduce heat to low. Simmer until pasta is tender, 15-20 minutes. Add a small amount of water near end of cooking if needed to prevent sticking. Add cheese during last two minutes of cooking.

ITI FABVSSA

The Choctaw Constitution of 1826

For this month's Iti Fabvssa, we are taking a short break from the "A New Chahta Homeland: A History by the Decade" series to share a copy of the first Choctaw constitution. This was recently transcribed from Henry Halbert's unpublished manuscript on Choctaw history and culture located at the Alabama Department of Archives and History in Montgomery. The Choctaw General Council ratified this constitution on August 5, 1826, and it was followed by a National Code that included 22 laws.

During this time, the Choctaw Nation was under the threat of removal by the United States. Choctaw leaders hoped to persuade the United States to drop discussions of removal by showing U.S. officials that Choctaw people could be "progressive" and "civilized." With this constitution, Choctaw leadership embedded long-established laws and practices that already had a place in Choctaw culture into a governmental form recognizable by U.S. leaders and citizens. While Choctaw leaders had long performed all roles of government, writing and approving a western-style constitution in 1826 was one means of demonstrating governing capability to the U.S. This constitution included elements of both U.S.-style government and Choctaw traditional governance. Other such examples of blending cultures included inviting missionaries into the Choctaw Nation to build schools and creating a police force known as the Lighthorse. To the United States, it looked like Choctaws were assimilating into American society. In reality, Choctaws played an active role in selecting elements of American life and incorporating them into Choctaw culture. Since this first Choctaw constitution is not widely available, we are sharing it here in its entirety. Our constitutional form of government is just one way that Choctaws uphold sovereignty throughout time.

(See Choctaw Constitution below)

This constitution is particularly significant for the way that it binds the three districts together in a way that the U.S. government would have to recognize. Article 2 ensured that the U.S. could no longer negotiate land cessions with just one leader. It ensured that all districts would be aware of any and all affairs. Article 3 can be interpreted as an attempt to prevent the debt of one chief from affecting the rest of the nation directly since the U.S. government often used individual chiefs' debt to leverage land cessions. While this constitution could not prevent removal, it was an important step for organizing Choctaw people and laid a foundation for the Choctaw Nation that established itself in the new homeland in Indian Territory. We continue this tradition to maintain our sovereignty and work to create ways forward for the future generations of Choctaw people.

In General Council of the Choctaws, August 5th

The chiefs and warriors of the different districts of the Choctaw Nation, having met in general council for the purpose of taking into consideration the affairs of the nation; and of determining what measures are necessary to be adopted to promote the general welfare; having felt the evils of a want of proper regulations among themselves; and having seen the necessity of entering into some definite compact, and passing a few general laws for the government of the whole nation, have, after full deliberation and reflection, agreed upon and adopted the following articles.

Article 1. There shall be a General Council of the nation, to be held at some designated spot – at least twice a year for the transaction of business

The General Council shall be composed,

1. Of the three principal chiefs;
2. Of the captains of each district, and
3. Of one warrior to accompany each captain, to be selected by the chiefs; each chief to make his own selection. Every one so selected shall be entitled to speak and vote in council: but his appointment shall not be considered as conferring any authority upon him out of the council.

If any law be passed by a majority of the captains and counsellors, it shall become a law and have effect throughout the nation, if it be approved by the chiefs or any two of them. If it be disapproved by the chiefs, or any two of them, it shall not become a law under two thirds of the captains and council present shall vote for it.

Any law or custom of a particular district, which conflicts with a general law shall be void.

Art. 2. It is distinctly understood, that the soil on which we live is the common property of the whole nation. No district shall ever sell, or part with, any portion of this land without the full and fair consent of the other two districts.

Art. 3. There shall be a standing committee of men in each district to be chosen by the chiefs, whose duty it shall be to watch over the general welfare of the nation, and see that the laws are duly carried into effect. In cases of a local nature, where the interest of a district is only concerned, they are to act as the ordinary counselors of the chief and assist him with their advice in the regular administration of justice.

No contract, made by any head chief; shall be binding upon the annuity, unless approved by the standing committee of the three districts, which shall meet together at some central spot four times a year for the transaction of the national business; and when thus met they shall be turned the National Committee. It shall be this duty to see that their annuities are faithfully applied; and that the public money is not squandered away on useless of improper objects. They shall act as auditors in arranging and determining on all claims, which may be brought against the nation. They shall have power (subject to an appeal to the general council) to reject all such claims, as they may think unjust, curtail such as they may think extravagant – and admit such as are reasonable and proper.

When depredations are committed by citizens of the United States upon any Choctaw or Choctaws, it shall be the duty of the National Committee to lay the facts of the case, with such proofs as can be procured, before the agent, so that compensation may be rendered to the injured party. At every Gen-

eral Council, the National Committee shall make a report of their proceeding since the last General Council, and suggest such laws and regulations as they may deem expedient for the public good.

Art. 4. That due order and decorum may be preserved in the transaction of business, the chiefs shall appoint a certain number of men, whose duty it shall be to present all disorderly and improper conduct at the councils and at the distribution of the annuities. Any person disturbing the council and using abusive or threatening language shall be taken into custody, and dealt with, as the council may determine.

Art. 5. The members of the standing committee shall be chosen to serve two years. When united and sitting as a National Committee, they shall choose a chairman who shall preside in their deliberations, and a clerk who shall keep a record of their proceedings.

Art. 6. The members of the National Committee shall also be considered as members of the General Council and shall speak and vote accordingly.

Art. 7. In pursuance of the suggestion of the first article, it is resolved, that for the erection of a National Council house at some central spot in the nation, the sum of four hundred and fifty dollars should be appropriated.

(Signed)

Tapanahuma,
David Folsom,
Greenwood Leflore.

Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

The Homeowners Substantial Rehabilitation Program helps provide assistance to low-income homeowners for home repairs and 504 ADA accessibility items to single-family homes. Homeowners must meet the eligible priority score of at least 60 points. Scores are based on income, age and family size. Additional points are given for documented disabilities and veterans.

The objective for substantial rehabilitation is to help bring the condition of homes to a decent, safe and sanitary standard through repairs to electrical, plumbing, roofing, HVAC, foundation or ADA accessibility components. Eligible repairs are based on a home inspection conducted by the Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation. Adding additional rooms to the home is not an eligible repair. If the home is determined not to be cost-effective, alternative housing options will be recommended. We strive to assist our Choctaw tribal members with the most effective and efficient services allowed with our resources.

Completed application with supporting documents including proof of residence, warranty deed and proof of homeowner insurance are required. The deed must have been filed for a minimum of one year.

This program is available within the reservation boundaries of the Choctaw Nation and does require a lien to be filed on your property. The lien is forgivable and will only be recouped if the property is sold.



Choctaw Nation

Stay Connected

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Housing Authority



INDEPENDENT ELDER HOUSING
1-800-235-3087 | Application available at your local Community Center
Choctaw Nation Housing Authority

THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS FOOD VOUCHERS

2021 APPLICATION AVAILABLE BEGINNING OCTOBER 1 ON CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHAHTAACHVFFA

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS: OCTOBER 22 | 4:30 PM
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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choctawstore.com

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Cultural Center Grand Opening



Photo by Chris Jennings

David Adams, center and Cathy Mielke are directed to the front during the Cultural Center grand opening. The couple came up from Arlington to be some of the first to see the new Choctaw Cultural Center.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Tina Loretto gets a closer look at beadwork on display in the new Choctaw Cultural Center.



Photo by Chris Jennings

L-R, Taylor Deaton, Taylor Moore and Jacqueline Gonzalez check out the creation story exhibit.



Photo by Chris Tlan Toews

Visitors peak through the window of a modern Choctaw Home on display at the Choctaw Cultural Center.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Emily Klein tries out stickball on the Choctaw Cultural Center grounds. Klein traveled from Detroit, Michigan, specifically for the grand opening of the Cultural Center.



Photo by Chris Jennings

Jerry and Linda Combrink look over a cooking display at the Choctaw Cultural Center.

Plan your fall foliage adventure in Choctaw Country

By Christian Toews

A cool breeze is in the air, sunshine is plentiful and the mountains are covered in brilliant fall colors. Where can you find this picturesque experience? Right here in Oklahoma. The eastern part of the state is home to views that rival Colorado and New England when it comes to putting on a show in the fall.

The fall foliage typically peaks in Oklahoma around Halloween and stretches into early November. During this time, the state is ablaze with yellows, reds and oranges in popular fall foliage hotspots such as Poteau, the Talimena Scenic Drive and Broken Bow.

The area with the most options for viewing the beautiful colors is near Talihina, Oklahoma. One of the end cities of the Talimena Scenic Byway, this Oklahoma town is not what you expect when you think of Oklahoma's typical prairies and plains. Talihina sits in the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains that extend into Arkansas. These mountains host amazing views all year, but there is something special about seeing them light up with colors in the fall. One of the most attractive features is a winding 54-mile scenic drive through the Ouachita Mountains known as The Talimena Scenic Byway. This roadway winds along the crest of the Mountains through the Ouachita National Forest from Talihina, Oklahoma, to Mena, Arkansas. With many scenic vistas to stop and enjoy, many people will spend an entire day on the drive enjoying the views. If you're planning to do this, be sure to pack a lunch or stop and get some snacks because there are no services along most of the drive.

If you're planning a trip to Talihina, why not stop by for the annual fall festival? Vera Nelson is the Talihina Chamber of Commerce director and has organized the Fall Festival since it began. November 6, 2021, will be the 33rd year of the festival. The event features arts and crafts, live

music, a car show, food booths, and special entertainment. She said somewhere around three thousand people visit the festival each year and come from all over the world. Nelson encourages everyone to drive up into the mountains and see the fall foliage up close when they attend the festival. According to Nelson, one of the best ways to get more information and enjoy the scenic drive is to stop by the visitor center in Talihina and pick up a Talimena Scenic Byway guidebook. You can also visit www.talimenascenicdrive.com and the Talihina Chamber of Commerce website www.talihinacc.com for more information in planning your trip.

Traveling south of Talihina, you'll find Broken Bow, Oklahoma. This area of Oklahoma is perfect for viewing the changing leaves in the fall. Beavers Bend State Park and the surrounding area have many places to drive, hike, ATV and camp, making this location an excellent option for spending time in the fall. You could ATV up to a sweeping vista above Broken Bow Lake or hike to one of the many incredible views inside Beavers Bend State Park. For more information on Beavers Bend State Park, visit visitmccurtaincounty.com and plan your trip today!

If you travel northeast from Talihina, you will find the city of Poteau. This city is home to the world's highest hill at 1999 feet above the surrounding area. This hill is an excellent place to pack a picnic and look at the fall foliage from a unique vantage point. Poteau offers many fall activities to enjoy. On September 24 and 25, Poteau holds the annual Old Frisco Trail Fall Festival. This festival includes food vendors, music, a 5k Glow Run, a half marathon and a 15k run. You can find out more information about the fall festival in Poteau by visiting www.poteauchamber.com.

No matter which of these locations you decide to view, the changing leaves this fall, you are sure to develop a new appreciation for the brilliant colors and amazing views that Oklahoma has to offer.

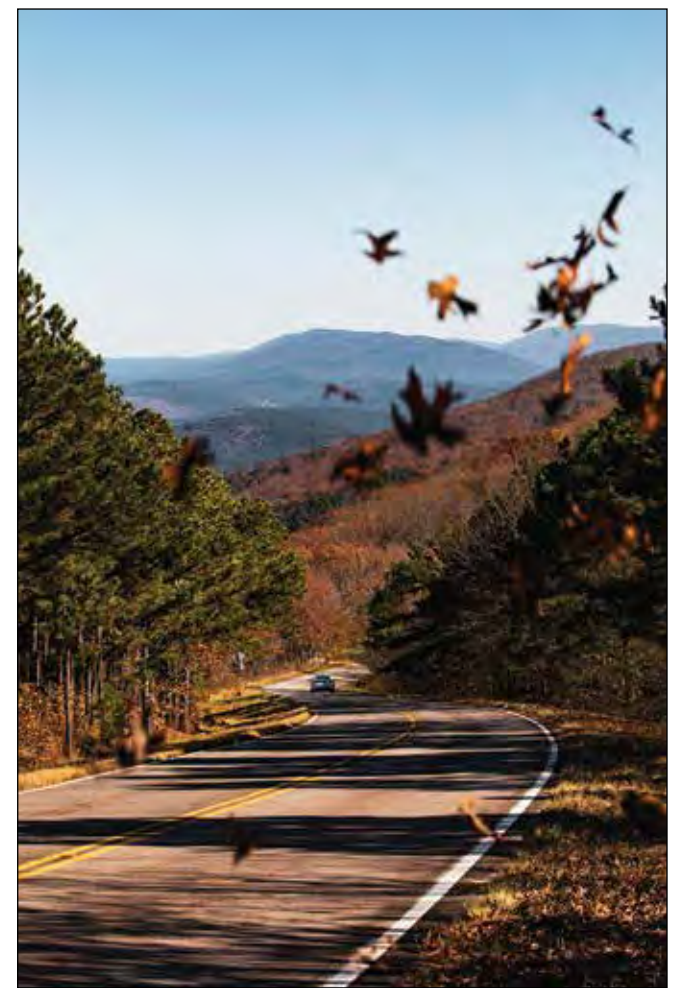


Photo by Christian Toews

Leaf lovers can see nature's beauty this fall on the Talimena Scenic Byway. This fall is the perfect time to take in the breathtaking views along this 54-mile long drive.

**JOIN US IN CELEBRATING
FIRST ANNUAL CHOCTAW FLAG DAY**
OCTOBER 16, 2021

On November 14th, 2020 Tribal Council voted to approve a Resolution recognizing and honoring October 16, 2021 as CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA FLAG DAY to Celebrate and reflect on the importance of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

The date is historically significant because on October 16, 1860, the Choctaw General Council passed an act that created the Great Seal of the Choctaw Nation. Choctaw Nation flags will be available at our Travel Plazas and online.

CHOCTAWNATION.COM/CHOCTAW-FLAG-DAY



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or visit <https://bit.ly/outreach-services>

SHOULD I BE SCREENED FOR LUNG CANCER?

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

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

Choctaw Nation Health Services

CHOCTAW NATION FOSTER CARE

FACEBOOK.COM/CHOCTAWNATIONFOSTERCARE/

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

CDC announces updated COVID-19 guidance in response to increase in delta variant cases

By Kendra Germany-Wall

Infection rates across the country continue to rise and are being linked to the delta variant of the COVID-19 virus. Infections, particularly those that lead to hospitalization, are higher in the unvaccinated population.

More than 30% of the eligible population in the United States still hasn't gotten a vaccine, a statistic that is concerning for experts and health professionals.

On Jul. 27, 2021, the CDC released updated guidance on the need for urgently increasing COVID-19 vaccination coverage and a recommendation for everyone in areas of substantial infection rates to wear a mask in public indoor places, even if they are fully vaccinated.

The CDC issued this new guidance due to several concerning developments and newly emerging data signals.

According to the CDC, the first concerning development is a reversal in the downward trajectory of cases. In the days leading up to this guidance update, CDC says it saw a rapid and alarming rise in the COVID case and hospitalization rates around the country.

In a press release last updated on Aug. 6, the CDC stated that "In late June, our 7-day moving average of reported cases was around 12,000. On Jul. 27, the 7-day moving average of cases reached over 60,000. This case rate looked more like the rate of cases we had seen before the vaccine was widely available."

According to the CDC, the second concerning development was new data began to emerge that the delta variant was more infectious and led to increased transmissibility compared to other variants, even in vaccinated individuals.

In the press release, the CDC stated, "This includes recently published data from CDC and our public health partners, unpublished surveillance data that will be publicly available in the coming weeks, information included in CDC's updated Science Brief on COVID-19 Vaccines and Vaccination, and ongoing outbreak investigations linked to the delta variant."

The delta variant is currently the predominant strain of the virus in the United States. Below is a high-level summary of what CDC scientists have recently learned about the delta variant.

The delta variant, officially known as B.1.617.2, is a mutation of the original SARS-CoV-2 strain. Originating in India, the World Health Organization recently called the delta variant the "fastest and the fittest" due to its rapid spread.

Below are some facts and figures from the CDC regarding the delta variant.

Infections and Spread

The Delta variant causes more infections and spreads faster than early forms of SARS-CoV-2

- The delta variant is more contagious: The delta variant is highly contagious, nearly twice as contagious as previous variants.
- Some data suggest the delta variant might cause more severe illness than previous strains in unvaccinated persons: In two different studies from Canada and Scotland, patients infected with the delta variant were more likely to be hospitalized than patients infected with alpha or the original virus strains.
- Unvaccinated people remain the greatest concern: Although breakthrough infections happen much less often than infections in unvaccinated people, individuals infected with the delta variant, including fully vaccinated people with symptomatic breakthrough infections, can transmit it to others. CDC is continuing to assess data on whether fully vaccinated people with asymptomatic breakthrough infections can transmit. However, the greatest risk of transmission is among unvaccinated people who are much more likely to contract, and therefore transmit the virus.
- Fully vaccinated people with delta variant breakthrough infections can spread the virus to others. However, vaccinated people appear to be infectious for a shorter period: Previous variants typically produced less virus in the body of infected fully vaccinated people (breakthrough infections) than in unvaccinated people. In contrast, the delta variant seems to produce the same high amount of virus in both unvaccinated and fully vaccinated people. However, like other variants, the amount of virus produced by delta breakthrough infections in fully vaccinated people also goes down faster than infections in unvaccinated people. This means fully vaccinated people are likely infectious for less time than unvaccinated people.

Vaccines

Vaccines in the U.S. are highly effective, including against the delta variant

- The COVID-19 vaccines authorized in the United States are highly effective at preventing severe disease and death, including against the delta variant. But they are not 100% effective and some fully vaccinated people will become infected (called a breakthrough infection) and experience illness. For such people, the vaccine still provides them strong protection against serious illness and death.

Masks

Given what we know about the delta variant, vaccine effectiveness, and current vaccine coverage, layered prevention strategies, such as wearing masks, are needed to reduce the transmission of this variant

- At this time, as we build the level of vaccination nationwide, we must also use all the prevention strategies available, including masking indoors in public places, to stop transmission and stop the epidemic.
- Vaccines are playing a crucial role in limiting spread of the virus and minimizing severe disease. Although vaccines are highly effective, they are not perfect and there will be vaccine breakthrough infections. Millions of Americans are vaccinated, and that number is growing. This means that even though the risk of breakthrough infections is low, there will be thousands of fully vaccinated people who become infected and able to infect others, especially with the surging spread of the delta variant. Low vaccination coverage in many communities is driving the current rapid and large surge in cases associated with the delta variant, which also increases the chances that even more concerning variants could emerge.

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

CNO COVID-19 Updates

Labor Day festival canceled

Due to the recent rise in COVID-19 cases and the delta variant and in awareness of public health, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) has announced the cancellation of large gatherings and events, including the 2021 Labor Day Festival, due to the increase of COVID-19 cases in the area.

"Our top priority is the health and safety of our tribal members, associates and the communities we serve," said Chief Gary Batton. "We realize this is a huge disappointment to our tribal members and those who have celebrated with us."

COVID-19 safety protocols and precautions have been re-implemented, and guests are encouraged to wear masks at all Choctaw Nation facilities. Wednesday Senior Nutrition meals at all Choctaw Nation Community Centers have resumed drive-through-only service beginning Aug. 11.

Chief Batton's annual State of the Nation Address and the 2021 Official Ceremonies for swearing in newly elected tribal officials will be available virtually across CNO digital channels, including Facebook, YouTube and website on Monday, Sept. 6. A virtual 2021 Princess Pageant will be announced at a later date.

For more information, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/covid-19> or follow Choctaw Nation on all social media platforms.

CNHSA visitor restrictions

On July 16, the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority announced it would reinstate COVID-19 visitor restrictions.

CNHSA Released the following statement. "Due to the increasing number of positive COVID-19 cases in Southeastern Oklahoma, it has become necessary to reinstate some of the previous visitor restrictions to ensure the safety of our patients and staff."

- Visitor restrictions are as follows:
- Everyone must wear a mask at all times while at a CNHSA facility.
 - Med-Surg patients will not be allowed a visitor. (1 assistive person may be allowed.)
 - ER and Clinic patients will only be allowed one parent or assistive person if needed. Otherwise, no visitors will be allowed to come with them.
 - Labor and Delivery patients will be allowed two visitors (total) but they must be tested for COVID-19 and cannot come and go from the facility.
 - Women's health patients can have significant others present for certain events.
 - Prenatal Visits – 1 visitor allowed
 - Gynecology Visits – No visitors

-Drivers for patients having surgical procedures can wait in the building while wearing a mask and after screening at the door.

-OR patients requiring COVID-19 testing will be tested in the parking lot when possible.

-Patients with COVID-19 symptoms will be triaged, examined and swabbed outdoors when possible.

-No sleep studies will be performed in the hospital.

Free COVID-19 vaccination

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is now offering COVID-19 vaccines to everyone ages 18 and older (ages 12 and older at select locations). The vaccine is 100% free; make your appointment today.

To make an appointment to receive the vaccine, call 800-349-7026 ext. 6, use your myCNHSA app, or visit my.cnhsa.com.

For more information and to see vaccination locations, please visit choctawnation.com/covid-19.

Drive-thru testing available

CNHSA clinics (where space allows) will be conducting outdoor testing during business normal hours.

The Choctaw Nation Health Care Center in Talihina will be offering drive-thru testing Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. For more information, visit choctawnation.com/covid-19.



Photo courtesy of Choctaw Nation Multimedia

COVID-19 cases are on the rise in the U.S. According to the CDC, getting vaccinated is essential in protecting yourself and your community.

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PACE Program benefits both tribal and non-Tribal communities.



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Plan your next fall foliage adventure in Choctaw Country.

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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