



September 2022 Issue



Districts face off against each other in the Elder Chair Volleyball regional qualifier tournament in Durant. The event consisted of 30 teams and over 230, with qualifying teams advancing to the tournament at the Labor Day festival at Tvshka Homma.



Above: Elders play a game of chair volleyball at the Durant Wellness Center. Chair volleyball is a way for people to build mobility, stay active and participate in healthy competition. Left: Eulema Mary Holman from Wilburton makes a play.

## CNO honors elders through programs, services designed to promote healthy aging

By Kendra Germany-Wall and Shelia Kirven

For over twenty years, September has been recognized as National Healthy Aging Month in the U.S. It is a time to raise awareness about the positive aspects of growing older and encourage staying active and healthy as you age.

People worldwide are living longer, and every country in the world is experiencing growth in both the size and the proportion of older people in the population.

According to the World Health Organization, by 2030, 1 in 6 people in the world will be aged 60 years or over. By 2050, the world's population of people aged 60 years and older will double (2.1 billion). The number of individuals aged 80 years or older is expected to triple between 2020 and 2050, reaching 426 million.

According to the National Institute on Aging (NIA), many factors influence healthy aging. Factors like exercise, a healthy diet, going to the doctor regularly, and taking care of our mental health are self-manageable.

Research supported by the NIA has identified actions individuals can take to help manage health, live as independently as possible, and maintain quality of life as they age.

Choctaw elders have the unique opportunity to access numerous services geared toward healthy aging and maintaining the quality of life.

Here is a comprehensive list of services and programs offered to Choctaw Elders.

### 202 Supportive Elder Housing

One-bedroom elder units are equipped with an Energy Star refrigerator, stove and central heating and air.

### Community Health Nursing

Provides services for tribal members in our rural communities to keep them healthy.

### Community Health Representative (CHR)

Assists Native Americans to maintain the health of themselves and their families.

### Elder Advocacy

Provides community outreach, advocacy, training, preparation and other support services.

### Elder Food Security (ARPA FRF)

Provides eligible Choctaw Nation tribal members with the opportunity to receive a \$200 monthly grocery allowance beginning September 2021.

### Eyeglasses, Dentures and Hearing Aid Program

Provides eligible Choctaw tribal members with eyeglasses, dentures or partials and hearing aids.

### Healthy Aging

Provides wellness, social services, behavioral health services, case management and providers in geriatric-specific care to assist elders in achieving a higher quality of life or maintaining an optimal level of functioning and wellness.

Healthy Aging also offers the Healthy Living Lending Closet program. Through this program, gently used medical equipment donations are repaired, sanitized and distributed to those in need. The Lending Closet is a way for people to donate gently used medical supplies they no longer need and provide them to people who need those items. For more information on the Lending Closet, call 580-916-9140 ext. 83849.

### Independent Elder Housing

Affordable housing is available to low-income elders who can live independently. The units are designed for one person or one person and their spouse.

### Nutrition Services

This program helps elders navigate healthy eating practices to improve overall health and help in fighting disease.

### Senior Nutrition

Provides meals, information, referral, transportation, wellness activities and arts and crafts to Native American elders.

### Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program

Eligible seniors in the Choctaw Nation service area can receive \$50 benefits for fresh fruits and vegetables from authorized area farmers.

Continued on 11



Photos by Christian Toews

Left: Lillie Boone from Atoka keeps the ball in bounds. Right: Spectators watch as elders fill the Wellness Center for the regional qualifier tournament.

## Choctaw elders take part in chair volleyball tournament

By Christian Toews

The Choctaw Nation Wellness Center in Durant hosted the elder chair volleyball regional qualifier tournament on Thursday, July 28.

Elders from every district of the Choctaw Nation made up the 30 teams participating in the tournament. The four winning teams will compete for the championship at the Labor Day festival at Tvshka Homma.

Chair volleyball started with the original Wellness Center in Durant around 2008.

"Over the last 14 years, with the expansion of our Senior Wellness Programs and the addition of 14 Wellness Centers, Elder Chair Volleyball is now played in every district, reaching every corner of the Choctaw Nation. Senior Wellness groups get together a couple of times a week and either play in one of our Wellness Centers or their local Community Center," said Chase Henson, the Choctaw Nation Wellness Director.

According to Henson, aside from the competition, chair volleyball is a way for people to build mobility and stay active.

"Some of the productive things they get from chair volleyball is, it helps with mobility and it helps with their fitness level because many of the participants will come in and participate in senior fitness programs before chair volleyball kicks off. Some of them will do a chair aerobics class before sitting down to play. But ultimately, it's a great way for them to socialize, build community, and have fun," he said.

Ione Shields from McAlester is a four-year veteran of chair volleyball. She is part of one of the four teams who will advance to the championships at Tvshka Homma this year. Shields said this was the second time she's made it to the championship tournament.

"In 2019, we won and went to Tvshka Homma, but we lost out, but it was fun," she said. Shields commented on the benefits she has seen from chair volleyball "It's really good for you health-wise. I just came back from a broken neck around Thanksgiving.

I had surgery. I have rods and screws in my neck. It's been good therapy. There have been people who were using walkers, and they don't even use walkers anymore. That's how good it is," said Shields.

According to Henson, there were over 230 people who attended this year's tournament.

The tournament involved one pool game that led to a double-elimination tournament. This year, the top four qualifying teams are Idabel 2, Bethel/Battiest, Poteau 1 and McAlester 1.

If you are interested in participating, contact your local Choctaw Wellness Center or Community Center for more information about joining a volleyball team.

The chair volleyball tournament is just one example of how the Choctaw Nation maintains the long-held honor toward elders. Honoring elders extends back as far as the earliest Choctaw history.

According to Judy Allen, Choctaw Nation's Historic Project Officer, elders have always been held in high regard in Choctaw society.

"Choctaws have had a strong family connection for the hundreds of years that history has documented our life values. The tribal members have cared for the young and the old, just as we do today. Paying respect to elders, learning from their wisdom, has always been an important part of continued success for the tribe as a whole," said Allen. Part of Judy Allen's work at the Choctaw Nation is preserving the history of the Choctaw people.

"The pleasure of paying respect and tribute to our elders is one of the greatest honors of my job. Visiting with them and listening to their life stories, hearing history through their memories, is a tremendous gratification," said Allen.

While programs like chair volleyball might seem like only a fun time, it represents a much larger to provide opportunities, assistance, community and honor to elders.

To learn more about programs specifically for elders, visit [www.choctawnation.com/services](http://www.choctawnation.com/services).



Over 230 people and 30 teams attended the elder chair volleyball regional qualifier tournament in Durant on July 28.



# Faith, Family, Culture



Chief Gary Batton

## All Hail the Chief

Halito,  
I hope you all are doing well! I wanted to introduce a new series to you: All Hail the Chief.  
From time to time, I'll highlight a Choctaw Chief so others may learn about some of our great cultural leaders. First up, Chief Pushmataha!

Chief Pushmataha served as Chief of the Okla Hannali, "Six Towns", in the Southern District of the Choctaw Nation in Mississippi from 1800 - 1824.

He was born in 1764, and little is known of his ancestry or early youth, but his name comes from the Choctaw phrase "Apushi Immvt Taha," meaning childhood is finished to him. He is quoted as saying, "Pushmataha has no ancestors; the sun was his father, the moon, his mother. A mighty storm swept the Earth; midst the roar of thunder, the lightning split a mighty oak and Pushmataha stepped forth a full-fledged warrior."

Chief Pushmataha was well known as a skillful warrior and a wise leader. He had established a reputation as an eloquent speaker and successful negotiator by 1800, able to speak four languages. He guided the Choctaw Nation to being an ally of the United States in the War of 1812 and was commissioned as a brigadier General, leading a battalion of Choctaw warriors in multiple engagements. When the 1820 Treaty of Doak's Stand was being negotiated, Chief Pushmataha insisted that a large sum be set aside as a perpetual school fund for the education of Choctaw youth.

In 1824, Chief Pushmataha went to Washington on business for the Choctaws. While there, he became ill and died December 24, 1824. He was granted full military honors and is buried in the Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.  
Yakohe and God bless!



Pastor Olin Williams  
Employee Chaplain

## Brainwashing

Webster defines brainwashing as "a forcible indoctrination to induce someone to give up basic political, social, or religious beliefs and attitudes and to accept contrasting regimented ideas." Every human being is brainwashed to some degree by one philosophy or another. If the right kind of "wash" is used, there is nothing wrong with brainwashing.

In a sense, everybody's beliefs, habits and attitudes are influenced by some form of "indoctrination." A person grows into the type of influence he or she is exposed to by society.

What about moral indoctrination? The church has the responsibility of teaching the morals of God. However, the church must be indoctrinated in the Word of Truth, for "sound doctrine" cannot be endured in our modern day.

2 Timothy 4:3,4 says, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned

into fables." Depravity itself holds the human creature captive to a satanically inspired humanism, in direct opposition to the truth of God. The natural unregenerate human cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God.

1 Corinthians 2:14 says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Jesus said, "Ye must be born again." Being born again is a spiritual regeneration in which an individual realizes his sinful unregenerate state and is in need of a savior. The process has begun by praying to the Lord and submitting his will to him or saving him. The spirit of God is placed in him, and his mind begins to be deprogrammed from sinful falsehood to program or "brainwash" with the Truth.

To effectively reprogram the convert, the Word of God must be preached, regardless of modern trends.

Acts 20:27 says, "For I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God." To continue the reprogramming process, the Lord told Joshua in the Book of Joshua 1:8, "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

For modern contemporary Christians, it is difficult to slow down and meditate on the Word of God. We are too busy to wait on the Lord.

Another factor is modern society is accustomed to "instant" results. It has found its way into the church. The modern believer wants God to answer in time to his expectations. God's blessing takes time and effort. Still, another is we desire modern audible stimulation from media devices that the art of quietude is all but lost.

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Choctaw Nation Small Business Development



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

## Join us for Labor Day

September is here, and like everyone else, I am excited that we will be able to celebrate Labor Day in person with each other this year!

To ensure everyone's safety, we made the difficult decision to cancel our annual Labor Day festival for the past two years due to the pandemic. But this year, we can't wait to come back together at Tvshka Homma on our sacred Capitol Grounds to celebrate and honor the Chahta culture.

As in Labor Days past, the weekend schedule is packed full of events to accommodate those who enjoy sporting events, traditional events like gourd dancing, princess pageants, or just family time on the grounds. There will be plenty of vendor booths for those of you with a sweet tooth or looking for that giant turkey leg. We will also have carnival rides for the children or for those young at heart.

Join us Sunday for Church services and stay for the all-day Chahta gospel singing. Our Labor Day weekend will be a great experience for everyone as we fellowship together and honor our Choctaw traditions.

And for those of you that enjoy your RVs, you can make reservations on our Labor Day Festival page at <https://www.choctawnation.com/events/cultural/labor-day>.

I look forward to seeing everyone come out and celebrate together our faith, family and rich culture.

See everyone on September 2!  
God bless.

## Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma in DC



Chief Gary Batton and CNO Executive Director of Advanced Technology Initiatives James Grimsley participated in the "White House Summit on Advanced Air Mobility" on August 3, 2022, in Washington, D.C.

Chief Batton delivered his keynote presentation, "Emerging Aviation Technology in Local Communities."

CNO's James Grimsley, a renowned drone expert, also participated in a panel discussion titled "Exploring the Benefits of UAS/AAM to the Public" immediately following Chief Batton's presentation.

## Choctaw-Ireland scholars visit CNO headquarters



The 2022 Choctaw Irish Scholarship recipients, Skylee Glass and Aurianna Joines - Palmer, will leave soon to pursue their masters degrees abroad.

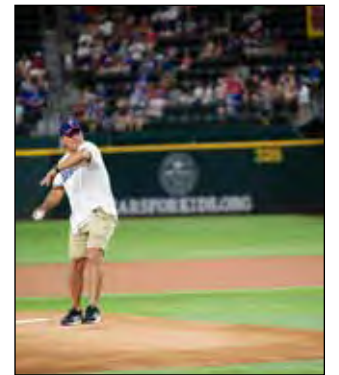
The duo visited the Choctaw Nation Tribal Headquarters on August 10 to visit with Chief Batton and Assistant Chief Austin before they left on their journey.

## Chief Batton throws the first pitch



Photos by Christian Toews

Chief Gary Batton had the honor of throwing the first pitch before the Texas Rangers vs. the Chicago White Sox game on August 5. Students from the CNO Youth Outreach program also attended the game to cheer Chief Batton and the Rangers on, and enjoy an evening of fun.



# 2022 OK SENIOR GAMES

Presented By

Basketball	Sept 3	Santa Fe Family Life Center, OKC
Golf Croquet	Sept 6	LaFortune Park, Tulsa
Water Walking	Sept 10	Westwood Family Aquatic Center, Norman
5K Race Walk	Sept 10	Riverside Parks, Tulsa
5K Power Walk	Sept 10	Riverside Parks, Tulsa
Archery	Sept 10	Trosper Park, OKC
Swimming	Sept 11	Westwood Family Aquatic Center, Norman
Oklahoma State Fair Booth	Sept 15-25	Oklahoma Fair Grounds
Cornhole	Sept 17	Hard Rock Hotel and Casino, Tulsa
5K and 10K Road Races	Sept 17	Perry Chamber of Commerce, Perry
Line Dancing	Sept 24	Oklahoma State Fair, OKC
Bowling	Sept 24-25	Coffee Creek Lanes, Owasso
Track and Field	Oct 1	Shawnee High School, Shawnee
1500 M Race and Power Walks	Oct 1	Shawnee High School, Shawnee
Golf	Oct 1	Muskogee Golf Club, Muskogee
Triathlon	Oct 2	Lake El Reno, El Reno
Cycling	Oct 8	Fort Sill, Lawton
Tennis	Oct 12, 13, 14	RH 91, Tulsa
Table Tennis	Oct 15	Moore Community Center, Moore
Pickleball	Oct 21, 22, 23	Life Time Athletic, OKC
Shuffleboard	Oct 22	Bixby Community Center, Bixby
Volleyball	Oct 22	Moore Community Center, Moore
Weight Lifting	Oct 29	Kaizen Performance Center, Norman
Badminton	Oct 29	Irving Recreation Center, Norman
Fitness	Various Dates	Many Locations: see OKSeniorGames.com
Racquetball	TBA	TBA
Celebration of Athletes	Nov 5	The White House Mansion, Tulsa

www.okseniorgames.com | (405) 821-1500 | info@okseniorgames



## OKCIC offers support to LGBTQ+ community

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – Oklahoma City Indian Clinic (OKCIC), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit clinic providing health and wellness services to American Indians in central Oklahoma, wants American Indians in the LGBTQ+ community to prioritize their health and wellness.

According to the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, people in the LGBTQ+ community are more likely to experience health disparities related to discrimination, which may lead to substance abuse, mental health conditions or suicide.

Patients who need mental health assistance can reach Oklahoma City Indian Clinic's Behavioral Health department at (405) 948-4900 ext. 610. If you or someone you know is at risk of harming themselves, please call 911 or reach out to any of these LGBTQ+ inclusive hotlines: <https://pflag.org/hotlines>.

In addition to behavioral health services, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic provides primary care, women's and men's health, dental, vision exams, PrEP, STD testing, hormone management for patients and much more.

"We are committed to providing excellent health care to all American Indians, including LGBTQ+ patients, families and employees," Robyn Sunday-Allen said, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic's Chief Executive Officer.

In March, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic received the designation of "LGBTQ+

Healthcare Equality Top Performer" in the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's Healthcare Equality Index. The clinic has taken several steps to create an inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ patients and employees, starting with a Diversity Council and Transgender Treatment Team to work side-by-side and address LGBTQ+ inequalities.

Oklahoma City Indian Clinic also engages the local LGBTQ+ community by attending the Oklahoma City PRIDE Festival every year and participating in the Oklahoma HIV Prevention CO-OP to provide safer sex packs and outreach events providing free HIV testing and education. In addition to in-person outreach, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic publishes resources for LGBTQ+ patients regularly on social media and in HORIZONS magazine.

Stop by Oklahoma City Indian Clinic's booth at Red Rock Expressions Community Center Saturday, June 4, 2022 for Pride on 39th.

About Oklahoma City Indian Clinic  
Oklahoma City Indian Clinic was established in 1974 to provide excellent health care and wellness services to American Indians in central Oklahoma. The clinic staff cares for more than 21,000 patients from over 220 federally recognized tribes every year. American Indians can receive a range of services, including medical, dental, pediatrics, prenatal, pharmacy, optometry, physical fitness, nutrition, family programs, and behavioral health services. For more information, please call (405) 948-4900 or visit [www.okcic.com](http://www.okcic.com).

## OSDE offers free math tutoring for grade 7-9

**OKLAHOMA CITY (Aug. 15, 2022)** – The Math Tutoring Corps initiative offered by the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) is encouraging interested Oklahoma families to register their students for free, high-dosage tutoring in mathematics. Beginning in September, trained tutors will work with groups of no more than four students in grades 7, 8 and 9 to reinforce the math processes they are studying in class and prepare them for higher-level coursework.

The tutoring will be done virtually and is designed for students who seek targeted support for growth in grade-level mathematics. Students will attend three 50-minute online tutoring sessions per week.

"Research has shown that students who participate in intensive, high-dosage tutoring improve their grades in math," said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Joy Hofmeister. "The Math Tutoring Corps will help kids have greater confidence in their math skills and be more college and career ready."

The OSDE launched a successful pilot program for Math Tutoring Corps in spring 2022, with nearly 400 participants. A post-pilot survey revealed:

90% of participants increased their understanding of mathematics.



Photo Provided

Oklahoma State Department of Education offers virtual tutoring designed for students seeking targeted support for grade-level mathematics growth.

84% of families said participating students were more confident about math.

84% of students indicated they would be more likely to persevere after making a mistake.

Students are eligible to participate in one or both of the OSDE's Math Tutoring Corps sessions during the 2022-23 school year.

Each session can accommodate up to 1,500 students. The first runs Sept. 18 through Nov. 19, the second in spring 2023. Families and students can enroll for the upcoming session through this link by Sept. 1. The OSDE will provide any needed technology or internet access, and

tutoring schedules will occur during students' free time outside of the school day.

Additional information is available on the OSDE's Math Tutoring Corps webpage.

The OSDE is investing \$5 million in pandemic relief funding in the Oklahoma Math Tutoring Corps through summer 2024. Math Tutoring Corps is a component of Ready Together Oklahoma: An Action Plan for Supporting Students Through the Pandemic and Beyond. More information is available in this FAQ document.

To see a video of a student from the Math Tutoring Corps pilot, click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WtkrnyJI0gQ>

## Some areas in Oklahoma begin wastewater monitoring for severe pathogens

**OKLAHOMA CITY** – The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH), Oklahoma City-County Health Department (OCCHD) and the Tulsa Health Department (THD) have partnered with researchers at the University of Oklahoma and the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center to monitor for several pathogens through wastewater surveillance.

"With the onset of COVID-19 we saw how wastewater surveillance was able to help predict potential surges or outbreaks of the virus in communities," said Julianne Stone, the State Epidemiologist. "We hope in the future this tool will be able to aid in the surveillance and monitoring of other pathogens."

Pathogens being monitored in wastewater

include Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), Salmonella, Campylobacter, Norovirus, West Nile Virus, and a type of E. coli called Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) and Monkeypox. Additional pathogens may be added in the future.

Monitoring is completely anonymous; samples cannot be tracked back to a specific person.

Because this is a new program in many areas, data sets are not yet robust, but are being collected continuously. It is important to remember this is a surveillance and monitoring tool. As we move forward, the information we learn will help us anticipate possible outbreaks and prepare accordingly.

"Wastewater surveillance is another public

health tool to help provide near real-time awareness of pathogens in our community," said THD Executive Director Dr. Bruce Dart. "As more data is collected over time, it helps to paint a more complete picture which can inform operational decisions at the local level."

The Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) protects and improves public health through its system of local health services and strategies focused on preventing disease. OSDH provides technical support and guidance to 68 county health departments in Oklahoma, as well as guidance and consultation to the two independent city-county health departments in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. Learn more at [Oklahoma.gov/health](http://Oklahoma.gov/health).

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Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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Anthony Dillard

## District 10

Tribal leadership recently held a strategic planning session to set the direction for the Tribe for the next five years. During this meeting, we partnered with Choctaw Nation's Education Department for the annual Superintendents' luncheon. Over 50 schools and more than ten vendors were present to discuss the educational opportunities for the Choctaw Nation. One major focus was on STEM curriculum, which is the foundation for jobs of the future. We were excited to share resources about Esports, Drones, Coding, Robotics, NASA and Project Lead the Way with public schools in our reservation. Vendors present opportunities, including Air Force, Army, Navy, Fatcap, NASA, Oklahoma Career Tech, Project Lead The Way, FAA and AISES. Ten schools that attended the luncheon received grants to implement Project Lead the Way (STEM curriculum) in their schools this year. Caney Schools won two complete

gaming systems to implement Esports! With education as a top priority across our reservation, we pray this is a successful year for all our area schools this upcoming year.

During our July Tribal Council meeting, I had the opportunity to recognize District 10's Veteran of the Year, Mr. Willard Harrison. Mr. Harrison began his career in the Marine Corps, where he nobly earned the Purple Heart Award. Mr. Harrison continued his service in the Army Reserves as a drill sergeant, serving in Fort Leonardwood, Fort Jackson, Fort Sill and Fort Polk. Mr. Harrison retired from the military in 2000. We are thankful for his duty and all of our veterans' continued sacrifices.

Choctaw Nation Tribal Council recognizes the importance of perpetuating and protecting the Choctaw language, which is vital to the nation's sovereignty. Mr. Isaac Sexton was recently recognized as the First Language Speaker of the Month for District 10. He has been instrumental in helping preserve our language in our district and community center.

As we close out this summer season, we look forward to an exciting Labor Day festival and we hope you can all attend.

Yakohe,  
Anthony Dillard  
Tribal Council-District 10



Council Member Anthony Dillard with July Veteran of the Month, Willard Harrison.



Council Member Anthony Dillard and Choctaw Nation Language faculty pose for a photo with July's First Language Speaker of the Month, Issac Sexton.



Caney Public School faculty pose for a photo with their new Esports equipment.

## CNO Community Partner Fund awards quarterly contributions

**Durant, Okla.** – The Choctaw Community Partner Fund gives quarterly contributions quarterly to cities and counties that host non-gaming businesses throughout the Nation's territories.

The expectation is for each local government to apply the Choctaw Community Partner Fund contribution toward supporting and developing the communities which serve tribal and non-tribal citizens.

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

**District 9** –The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Durant \$69,200 and Bryan County \$7,900 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue to continue strengthening and developing local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last three years and The Choctaw Nation has contributed a combined total of \$947,100 to the city of Durant and Bryan County.

**District 10** – The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Atoka \$32,600 Stringtown, \$13,600 and Atoka County \$22,200 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to

continue strengthening and developing the local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last three years and The Choctaw Nation has contributed a for a combined total of \$931,850 to the cities of Atoka, Stringtown and Atoka County.

**District 11** – The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of McAlester \$15,500 and Pittsburg County \$6,200 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue strengthening and developing the local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last three years and The Choctaw Nation has contributed a combined total of \$263,550 to the city of McAlester and Pittsburg County.

**District 12** – The Choctaw Nation awarded the city of Coalgate \$6,000 and Coal County \$4,000 from the Choctaw Community Partner Fund to continue strengthening and developing the local area.

The Choctaw Community Partner Fund has been an ongoing effort for the last three years and the Choctaw Nation has contributed a combined total of \$96,900 to the city of Coalgate and Coal County.



From left to right: Brad Irwin, Choctaw Nation Small Business Advisor; James Frazier, Choctaw Nation Council Member District 12 and Johnny Jump, Coalgate City Manager.



From left to right: Brad Irwin, Choctaw Nation Small Business Advisor; James Frazier, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 12 and Brock Jones, Coal County Commissioner.



Photo by Choctaw Nation

From left to right: Robert Karr, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 11; Marianne and Brian Akins, Owners of B&M Mowing and David Smith, Choctaw Nation Small Business Advisor.

“With B&M Mowing you don't have to spend countless hours maintaining your yard. With reliable, high quality care for your outdoor space we've got you covered,” states Brian Akins, owner of B&M Mowing. “With this donation from the Choctaw Nation we'll be able to continue to grow B&M Mowing, offer new services to our customers and expand outside Pittsburg County.”

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

“What B&M Mowing has been able to accomplish in the last 14 years is truly amazing and with this forgivable loan they'll be able to continue to provide top quality services to their customers.” states Robert Karr, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 11.

B&M Mowing will use the funds received from the Choctaw Nation to purchase additional lawn equipment to support new services they plan to offer their current and future customers.

For more information on B&M Mowing call, Brian Akins at 918-429-8748.



CNO honors District 11 first language speaker Betty Thomas

District 11 first language speaker, Betty Thomas, was honored at the August 13 Choctaw Tribal Council meeting.

Thomas shared an emotional story about the struggles of growing up as a Choctaw speaker and being forced to learn English.



From left to right: James Dry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 9 and Michael Southard, Choctaw Nation Director of Economic Development.



From left to right: Anthony Dillard, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 10 and Angie Nuttall, Atoka County Representative.



From left to right: Anthony Dillard, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 10 and Rick Boston, Mayor of Stringtown.



From left to right: Robert Karr, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 11 and Kevin Smith, Pittsburg County Commissioner.

Photos by Choctaw Nation



From left to right: Robert Karr, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 11; Adam White, McAlester Economic Development; Dave Andren, McAlester City Manager and Chief Gary Batton.



From left to right: Ron Boyer, Bryan County Commissioner and James Dry, Choctaw Nation Tribal Council Member District 9.

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## HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES

CONTACT 800-522-6170 OR [HIGHSCHOOLSTUDENTSERVICES@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:HIGHSCHOOLSTUDENTSERVICES@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)

Choctaw Nation High School Student Services



CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

DAILY INTERACTIVE PROGRAMMING



**Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation**

September 6	Talihina	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
September 7	Antlers	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 9	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
September 9	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
September 13	Idabel	10:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 14	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 16	Crowder	By Appointment
September 20	Broken Bow	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
September 21	McAlester	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.
September 21	Stigler	By Appointment
September 23	Atoka	8 a.m. - 11 a.m.
September 23	Coalgate	1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
September 27	Wright City	10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
September 28	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2 a.m.

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

**CHOCTAW VETERAN ADVOCACY PROGRAM**

Are You a Choctaw Veteran?

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

580-642-8451 | BIT.LY/CNO-VETERANS-ADVOCACY

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

**Biskinik Announcement Guidelines**

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above. Couples may send announcements of silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements.

News from graduates of higher education only and sports submissions will be accepted as space allows.

We welcome all letters from Choctaw tribal members. However, because of the volume of mail, it isn't possible to publish all letters our readers send. Letters chosen for publication must be under 150 words. We require full contact information. Only the writer's full name and city will be published.

All events send to the Biskinik will run the month of the event or the month prior to the event if the event falls on the first of the month.

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

Gary Batton Chief      Jack Austin Jr. Assistant Chief

The Official Monthly Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**Sauna Williams, Executive Director**  
**Kristina Humenesky, Senior Director**  
**Kellie Matherly, Content Development Director**  
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email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)

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

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

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

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

**EVENTS**

**Goodland Cemetery Association Cake and Pie Auction**

October 1, 2022, Kiamichi Area Vo-Tech, 107 South 15th Hugo, OK 74743. Auction will begin approximately 6:30

This fundraiser is for the upkeep of the Goodland Cemetery. If you have family or friends buried in the cemetery or if you would like to support the cemetery please come and join us.

**Join the Oklahoma Indigenous Nurses Association**

The Oklahoma Indigenous Nurses Association (ONIA) is searching for new members. ONIA is a chapter of the Oklahoma Nurses Association. ONIA hosts meetings on the first Wednesday of the month at noon. All nurses serving Oklahoma Indigenous community to join the OINA circle of healing at <https://ona.nursingnetwork.com> or like us on Facebook at Oklahoma Indigenous Nurses Association. To receive emails about these specific meetings, join ONA by going to [www.oknurses.com](http://www.oknurses.com).

**Indigenous Perspectives Project wants feedback from Indigenous voices on Centennial Land Run Monument**

The Indigenous Perspectives Project is a collaboration of grassroots activists and representatives from the City of Oklahoma City to address the information presented at the Centennial Land Run Monument site. The three phase project is intended to publicly acknowledge the original inhabitants of this territory as well as those forcibly relocated here in the 1880's. We intend to propose an additional project adjacent to the Centennial Land Run Monument site that will convey an accurate history of Indigenous people before, during and after the allotment and land runs. Phase One of the Project is the gathering of information from you, the community to truly represent as many indigenous voices as possible. It is important that you provide input to include your thoughts and ideas on how to educate everyone that visits the Land Run area about the Indigenous history and perspective of the land runs. Your feedback will help us build the framework to accurately tell the true history of the Land Runs.



1. When you see images of the Land Run Monument, how does it make you feel?
  2. What is your understanding and knowledge about the Land Runs that took place in what is now Oklahoma from a native viewpoint?
  3. What information would you like to see displayed near the Land Run Monument site to educate tourists and park visitors from an indigenous perspective?
  4. Are you a member/citizen of a tribal nation located in the state of Oklahoma?
- Email responses to [indigenoussperspectiveproject@gmail.com](mailto:indigenoussperspectiveproject@gmail.com).



**HONOR GUARD**  
— POSITIONS AVAILABLE —

APPLY BY CONTACTING: 580-642-8451

[VETERANSADVOCACY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM](mailto:VETERANSADVOCACY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM)

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

**CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL**  
REGULAR SESSION AGENDA  
August 13, 2022

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE
3. ROLL CALL
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
  - a. Regular Session July 9, 2022
5. WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
  - a. Veteran of the Month, District #11 – Thomas Braswell
  - b. First Choctaw Language Speaker, District #11 – Betty Thomas
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS
  - a. John Roebuck – Individual Speaker – Light-horse Program
7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
8. NEW BUSINESS
  - a. Approve Funding of the Due Diligence Costs for Construction of a Water Storage Unit in Hugo, OK
  - b. Approve the Purchase of Real Property Located at 132 SW O Street, Antlers, Oklahoma
  - c. Approve the Purchase of Real Property Located at 808 Dallas Street, Taihina, Oklahoma
  - d. Approve the Purchase of Real Property Located at 1626 S. George Nigh Expressway, McAlester, Oklahoma
  - e. Approve Application to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development for Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) Funds
  - f. Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles
  - g. Amend the Public Health and Safety Code
9. OTHER NEW BUSINESS
10. OLD BUSINESS
11. ADJOURNMENT
12. CLOSING PRAYER

All Council Members were present. All Vote Counts: YEAs - Unanimous; Vote Result: All Passed

**NOTES**

On April 8, 2021, I received an e-mail inviting me to be a background actor on Sterlin Harjo's, "Reservation Dogs", Season 1 Episode 2 (NDN Clinic).

While I was there, I met and talked with most of the cast, film crew, and the director. I was surprised when the series came out and most of the scenes I was in, was chosen to be on the show.

While I was there everyone was very nice and I had a great time while on set.

- William Thompson

On July 20th while on a tour in Ireland I was able to get my tour guide to make a short stop that wasn't part of our itinerary. Since it meant the world to me to see it and me being a Choctaw tribal member and he had never met a member he made the stop for me. I hope that you would publish this beautiful moment in hopes that it inspires other members to make the trip to see.

- Crystal Gray



Gardner Family reunion held at Old Church

The 69th Annual Gardner Family reunion was held June 19th at Old Bennington Presbyterian Church with over 50 family members in attendance.

Oldest living Gardner to attend was Kenneth Gardner. Largest Family to attend was Harold Gardner. Furthest Travel to attend was Tyler Gardner. Youngest family member to attend was Thane Gardner.

The present slate officer were re-elected: David Gardner, president, Tyler Gardner, vice president, Pearl Seaboy (Gardner), secretary.

The Gardner Reunion will be held next year at Old Church in Bennington, Ok June 18, 2023. The Gardner family would like to invite all Gardner family and friends to come join them next year for the 70th Annual Gardner and Friends reunion.

- Pearl Seabody

**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:

Wilburton Community Center  
September 16, 2022  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

**Chahta Anumpa Aikhvna**  
September Language Lesson

**Kucha Aiyimma**  
Weather questions and statements

Kucha yvt pisa katiohmi?	What is the weather like outside?
Hvshi tomi hosh hikja.	The sun is shining.
Himak nittak vt kappvsa-cha chi.	It's going to be cool today.
Kuchvt kapvssa chi.	It's going to be cold.
Il ia kiyo makilla. Omba chi.	We better not go. It's going to rain.
Pilashash omba chi-yyohmi tuk.	It really rained yesterday.
Himak afvmmi pa ik ombo chohmi.	It has not rained much this year.
Nittak kanimikash lvshpa chiyyohmi tuk.	It was really hot the other day.
Himak toffa pvt lvshpa chiyyohmi.	It is really hot this summer.
Kucha ish iakmvt ish ahah ahnikma.	Be careful when you go out.
Na waya micha hashuk vt lua taha.	The vegetables and grass are burned.
Hoshonthi chohmi.	It's sort of cloudy.
Onnakma oktusha chi.	It's going to snow tomorrow.

Omba hosh hikja.	It's raining.
Mahli hosh hikja.	It's windy.
Oktusha hosh hikja.	It's snowing.

Omba – rain  
hosh - connects to a verb  
hikja – v. to be standing

The sentences state 'it is in the state (standing) of raining, windy, and snowing'.

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



### Barbush wins Native Youth Golf Championship

Choctaw tribal member Ella Barbush, who is entering her senior year at Durant High School, won the girls 16-18 division at the NB3 Foundation Native Youth Golf Championship, held at the Santa Ana Golf Club in Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 24-26. Winning the tournament earned Ella a spot in the Notah Begay III Girls National Championship to be held in Kinder, Louisiana, in November – which will be broadcast on the Golf Channel.

Ella said that winning the Native Youth Championship was the greatest accomplishment of her golfing career. “This tournament meant more than any other I have ever played. I wasn’t just representing myself or my school. I was representing the Choctaw Nation, and I was not coming home without the trophy.” Ella, the daughter of District Court Judge Amy Pierce, noted that she wore her Mother’s official Choctaw National Judicial Branch shirts to compete in the tournament to show her pride in her

people and her Mom. “It helped because it made me feel like my Mom was there with me, even though she was back in Durant serving the Nation,” said Ella.

Ella says she will wear the same shirts again when she tees them up in the Notah Begay Girls National Championship.

Other Choctaw members who competed and won their division of the Native Youth Championship were Harlow Gregory of Norman, Oklahoma, who won the Girls 10-11 division and Ainsle Stanford III of Edmond, Oklahoma, who won the Boys 12-13 division. They also earned a spot in the Notah Begay III National Championship.

Ella noted that the Choctaw competitors wishing each other well on the tee box, during warm-ups and cheering each other on while on the course made the tournament extra special. Ella explained that on the last few holes, quite a contingent of spectators had begun following her match. It was one of the most competitive, and seeing



Harlow Gregory cheering her on to the finish line helped “because there was no way I was going to let myself or my people down by letting it slip through my fingers.” Ella held on to win and now is excited for the challenge of playing in the Notah Begay Girls National Championship. In her post-round interview, Ella stated, “I believe it is going to be a great experience that will definitely push my game to a new level, and I am excited to see what I can put out there.”

### Wabaunsee crowned National American Miss Kansas Teen



Ishta Wabaunsee, daughter of Natalie Jefferson Wabaunsee and the late James Wabaunsee, has earned the prestigious 2022 National American Miss Kansas Teen title at the state pageant held July 10, 2022.

Wabaunsee’s activities include the National Honor Society, Equity Action Council, Topeka Youth Commission, and her initiatives Indigenous Intelligence and Heroes Fighting Hunger. She is the granddaughter of Margaret Hernandez (Battiest) of Broken Bow, Oklahoma, and the late Leo

B. Jefferson, formerly of Broken Bow, Oklahoma. She will be attending the National Pageant to be held in Orlando, Florida, during Thanksgiving week, representing the great state of Kansas. She will have the opportunity to win her share of over \$100,000,000 in cash and prizes.

The National American Miss Pageants are dedicated to celebrating America’s greatness and encouraging its future leaders.

Each year, the National American Miss Pageants awards 1.5 million dollars in cash, scholarships, and prizes to recognize and assist the development of young women nationwide. National American Miss has added the ultimate door prize to Nationals 2022. Each girl that qualifies for the national pageant has a chance to win a new 2022 Ford Mustang Convertible. For more details, visit [www.namiss.com/](http://www.namiss.com/). National American Miss is dedicated to developing the success of young women across our nation with a program designed to be age-appropriate and family-oriented. Pageants are held in each state for girls ages four to eighteen in five different age divisions.

### Lujan earns educational administrative certificate

Vandy McIntyre Lujan earned her educational administrative certificate from New Mexico Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Her educational journey began in Las Vegas, New Mexico, from August 1980 through 1983, and Lujan moved to New Orleans, Louisiana. She later transferred her credits and received her B.A. in early childhood education from the University of New Orleans in Louisiana in 1993. The Lujan family, Greg, Vandy and their children Sarah and Gregory, moved back to Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1999. She then began teaching with Albuquerque Public Schools. Lujan received her Master’s in education with a focus on Reading in 2014 and her Educational Leadership certificate in May 2022 through New Mexico Highlands University.

“A huge thank you to the Choctaw Nation and its leadership for the support and understanding of the importance of education at all levels and for all ages of its tribal members,” said Lujan.



### Jones admitted to law school

Leah Gail Jones, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and a graduate of the University of Maryland in Environmental Law, has been admitted to the Law School of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg,

Virginia. She begins her classes in August.

Leah is the daughter of Marvin and Julie Amberson Jones of Washington, DC.

She wishes to thank the Choctaw Nation for all the help and support she has received over the years as she progressed in her education.



### Labor graduates from OSU

Regan Labor graduated on May 7, 2022, with a bachelor’s in agriculture science and natural resources in horticulture from Oklahoma State University.

### Basuras celebrate 65 years

On June 15, 1957, Michael Basura and LaDawn Kay Boyd were married in Los Angeles, California.

A celebration of the 65 years was held at the family home in Sun Valley, California. Their two sons and their wives were in attendance, Brian and Claudia, and Bruce and Melissa. Also attending were Michael and John, grandsons, nieces, nephews, and several long-time friends.

LaDawn Kay is the daughter of John Boyd and Audie (Self) Boyd. Her Choctaw heritage is from her mother, a registered Choctaw Minor on the rolls.



### Weems turns 85

Joyce Dwaine Thomas Weems of Winters, Texas, turned 85 this year. Joyce was born on August 25, 1937, in Leflore County. Her grandfather, Sweeny Thomas, was an original enrollee of the Choctaw Nation. Joyce is very proud of her Choctaw Heritage and enjoys visiting Oklahoma, where her roots are, whenever she can.



### Messina Chapman graduates from OU

Messina K. Chapman, from Norman, Oklahoma, graduated in May from the University of Oklahoma, earning a Bachelor of Arts in journalism with a major in advertising and a minor in non-profit organizational studies.

She was honored by being on the President’s and Dean’s Honor Rolls after earning a 4.0 GPA for four semesters. Messina plans

to pursue a career in Advertising and continue with her own photography business, Messina C. Photography.

The daughter of Gregory and Dallas Blake Chapman of Norman, Messina is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation and would like to thank them for their help and support throughout her college career.

### Tribal member making a difference to protect wildlife

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF), America’s largest wildlife conservation and education organization, are pleased to announce that “Rita” Payton Stanley, Oklahoma City, has successfully created a Certified Wildlife Habitat through its Garden for Wildlife program. In addition,

Ms. Payton Stanley’s habitat has been co-certified with NWF’s state affiliate, the Conservation Coalition of Oklahoma.

NWF celebrates this effort to create a garden that supports birds, bees, frogs and other local wildlife. Every Certified Wildlife Habitat garden provides natural sources of food, water, cover and places to raise young and is maintained in a sustainable way that incorporates native plants, conserves water and doesn’t rely on pesticides.

For over 45 years, the Garden for Wildlife movement has recognized over 227,000 Certified Wildlife Habitat gardens across the United States, encompassing more than 2.5 million acres supporting wildlife

locally. Backyards, urban gardens, school grounds, businesses, places of worship, campuses, parks, farms, zoos and community landscapes can all be recognized as wildlife habitats through the program.

“Anyone, anywhere can restore wildlife habitat right in their own yards and communities,” said NWF Naturalist David Mizejewski. “Whether you garden in a suburban yard, an urban area or a rural plot of land, you can make a difference for local wildlife. Creating a Certified Wildlife Habitat garden is fun and easy and makes a real difference for neighborhood wildlife. It’s the perfect grassroots way to think globally and act locally and help birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife,” he added.

“From my Choctaw father, growing up in rural Atoka County, I learned people, the earth, the planet, the universe, are all one and are eternally entwined. Wildlife must be preserved,” said Payton Stanley.

Many of NWF’s state

affiliate organizations are partners in the Certified Wildlife Habitat® program. Habitats in partnering states have national and state certifications.

Every Certified Wildlife Habitat garden is now also part of the Million Pollinator Garden Challenge, a national effort to create a million gardens that provide habitat for declining pollinator insects such as butterflies and bees.

Participants who have their wildlife habitat garden certified receive a personalized certificate with a unique habitat number, a one-year membership to NWF with a subscription to National Wildlife magazine, a subscription to the Garden for Wildlife e-newsletter, a 10 percent discount to the National Wildlife catalog, and the exclusive right to post a Certified Wildlife Habitat yard sign.

For more information on NWF’s Garden for Wildlife movement and how to qualify to have a garden space recognized as a Certified Wildlife Habitat, visit [www.nwf.org/garden](http://www.nwf.org/garden) or call 1-800-822-9919.



T	H	N	C	M	U	O	R	L	E	A	C	R	S	A
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U	E	A	R	T	H	T	R	R	D	D	S	M	M	G
H	N	H	E	R	U	T	A	N	R	E	H	T	O	M
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- reuse trash paperboard
- reduce composting styrofoam
- recycle mother nature plastic
- garbage earth paper

Learn more about Choctaw Nation Recycling Centers!  
[choctawnation.com/services/recycling/](http://choctawnation.com/services/recycling/)

# BIGFOOT 5K

BIGFOOT 5K-1 MILE

SATURDAY | OCT 1, 2022 | 8AM

CHRIST 40 ACRES | HONOBIA, OK

The 5K will be a challenging course with 1 mile on dirt. There is a 1 hour time limit. 5K and 1 mile start at 8 a.m.  
 Located at the intersection of the Indian Trail Hwy and State Hwy 144.

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

**Choctaw Nation** Environmental Protection Service



### Mumford turns 13

Alexis Mumford recently celebrated her 13th birthday. She shares a birthday week with her brother Mason who turned 14.

They celebrated their birthday at home with a pool party surrounded by family and friends. She was born on July 6, and Mason was born on the 4th of July. They have both been an explosion of energy ever since. Alexis is the firstborn daughter, granddaughter and girl cousin. Mason is the firstborn son, grandson and boy cousin.

This is the first of many milestones, but we know you are going to do great! Happy Birthday baby girl and baby boy! Love Nana, Poppy, Momma, Uncle Scottie, Uncle Jason, Aunt Isha, sisters Cora and Kadee, brother Breck and cousins Henry, Huck, Harper and Harvey.



### Williams celebrates 95th birthday

Napoleon Williams celebrated his 95th Birthday on July 13. He was born in Kinta, Oklahoma. On the Choctaw side, his mother was Ruby Rabon Williams of McCurtain and his grandmother was Mary Edmonds Rabon from Mtn Station/Kinta.

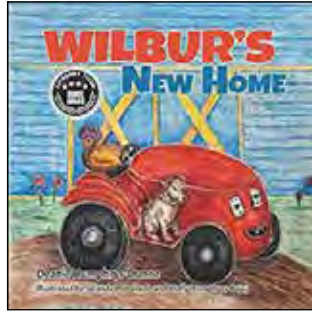
### Anderson graduates from UNR

Teriessa Anne B. Anderson is the first daughter of Meden and John Anderson and the first granddaughter of James R. Anderson and the late Mary M. Anderson to graduate with a Bachelor of Science in marketing at the University of Nevada, Reno.



### Choctaw artist co-illustrates book

Deanie Humphys-Dunne's book Wilbur's New Home earned an award from Speak-UpTalkRadio.com for its illustrations. Choctaw tribal member Wanda Lewis Urbazo and artist Holly Humphys-Bajaj illustrate the award-winning book.



The book was described by children's author Hollie Anne March as "a sweet story about Wilbur, the cutest tractor, who faces an unknown future with patience and hope."

"This story features Wilbur's adorable friend Hattie, who supports him along the journey into his new home," said Marsh.

The book can be purchased on Amazon.

### Cokeley takes second place in OIE Student Art Competition

In honor of its 50th anniversary, the Office of Indian Education hosted the Student Artist Competition (SAC). The 2022 competition theme was "50 Years of OIE: A Celebration and Call to Action."

Entries for the SAC related to the theme and show the importance of education for Native youth.

Congratulations to our grandson, Ryder Cokeley, for winning 2nd place in Art for his age group, presented by the United States Office of Indian Education. Choctaw Proud.

Choctaw tribal member Ryder Cokeley placed second in the 3rd-4th grade Art category with his piece Live Free.



### Ruthie James is District 4 Sr. Miss

Ruthie James of Poteau is the 21-year-old daughter of Kristele James.

Ruthie enjoys drawing, painting and baking. She spends her leisure time playing outside with her nieces, nephew, and little cousin and cuddling her cat, Chili.

She practices stickball, volunteers at the community center during events and holidays, and does traditional dance and stickball demos with the Ynnvsh Homma Youth stickball team.

Note: A photo of Ruthie James was unavailable at the time of publication of the August issue of the Biskinik and was not included in the 2022 Choctaw Princess Pageant announcement.



### Hollingsworth graduates from Cal Poly

Robert G Hollingsworth, son of Robert and Gina Hollingsworth, grandson of Margie Roseen Cochnauer and Randall Hollingsworth, great-grandson of Green Wood and Hazel Cochnauer and Robert and LaVon Hollingsworth graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo campus with a degree in mechanical engineering.



### Ellis interns with the Unmanned Systems Research Institute at OSU

Choctaw Nation member, Matthew Ellis, was awarded a paid internship this summer with the Unmanned Systems Research Institute (USRI) on the OSU campus in Stillwater.

USRI conducts research specific to unmanned systems such as drones, planes, weather balloons and other autonomous vehicles.

Working under OSU professors and research engineers, Matthew was involved in experimental atmospheric data collection through the use of kites and planes. Matthew also assisted in the repairing of high-altitude weather balloons that will be used to collect data for the National Weather Service and NASA. Other duties included CAD prototyping, data processing, and lab organization.

He most enjoyed the hands-on nature of the work and collaborating with like-minded peers and professors.



### Tustin graduates from PSU

Daniel Gene Tustin recently graduated from Pittsburg State University with his Bachelor of Science in technology with a major in graphic communications and emphasis in digital media.

While attending PSU, he worked at KOAM as the news assistant and was a photo-journalist for the Pittsburg State Collegio newspaper.

Daniel is grateful to the Choctaw Nation for all the support he received in college via the Higher Learning Education Program.

Daniel plans to move to North Denver, Colorado and pursue a career in digital media. His family is very proud of his achievements.



### Nelson turns 1

Mason Blaine Nelson of Atoka celebrated his first birthday in May. Mason is the son of Blaine Nelson and Sarah Turner, both of Atoka. His paternal grandparents are Nathan Nelson of Atoka and Catherine Wade of Oklahoma City. Mason's maternal grandparents are William Turner and Candace Kiser, both of Atoka. His paternal great-grandparents are Carrie and T.R. Nelson Sr. of Lane, OK.

Shawnee Community Meeting



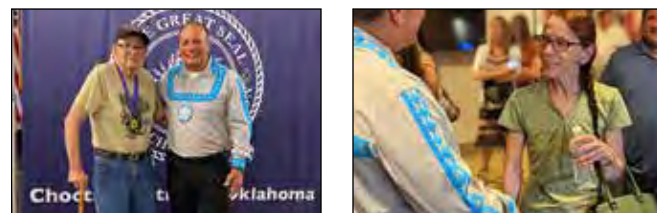
### Tulsa Community Meeting



### Tacoma Community Meeting



### Portland Community Meeting



### Clovis Community Meeting



### Tempe Community Meeting



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

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma • TOGETHER WE'RE MORE •



### May celebrates 100 years

Evelyn May celebrated her 100th birthday on August 4, 2022.

She enjoyed the celebration with her children, Linda Sharp (Gene), Carolyn Anders, Patricia Wyatt(Derry1) and Danny May. Also attending were 12 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, four great-great-grandchildren and other family friends.

### Braswell named veteran of the month



Choctaw Nation's Veteran of the Month is Thomas Jerry Braswell.

Braswell was born October 20, 1933, in McAlester, Oklahoma. He attended elementary school in Al-derson and high school in McAlester, graduating with the class of 1952.

He then attended Eastern Oklahoma A&M, which later

became Eastern Oklahoma College and graduated with a bachelor of science. While there, Braswell was a member of the Air Force ROTC. He also attended East Central University in Ada, Oklahoma.

In the winter of 1955, Braswell was drafted into the United States Navy and underwent basic training in San Diego, California. He served on the U.S.S. Estes and El Dorado. While serving in the Navy, he earned the rank of Yeoman 3rd Class. He was honorably discharged from the Navy and returned to Oklahoma.

Braswell continued in the workforce at Rockwell International until he returned to the service in 1973 after receiving orders to the Army reserve center in McAlester. After serving 20 years, he retired with the rank of Sergeant 1st Class. While serving in the Army, Sgt. Braswell worked as an administrative supply technician at the Army Reserve Center, then was promoted to unit administrator. He retired October 1, 1994. He also worked part-time for Brumley Funeral Home.

He married Shirley Mae Cloud on June 17, 1962, in Quinton, Oklahoma. They have one son, Ryan Thomas, and a daughter-in-law, Christina, and are the grandparents of grandsons Layne Thomas and Connor Braswell.

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

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Choctaw Nation Johnson-O'Malley Program



**Tracy Lynn Jessie**

Tracy Lynn Jessie, 61, passed away May 10, 2022.

Tracy was born June 14, 1960, in Lawton, Okla., to Harry and Rubye Louise (Parker) Jessie.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Tracy is survived by his brothers Roger Jessie and spouse Diane, Darrell Jessie, Mike Jessie, Harry Jessie and spouse Delores, Bruce Jessie and spouse Patricia, and Jeff Jessie; sister Pamela Jessie-Thompson; several aunts and uncles; and numerous nieces and nephews.

For the full obituary, please visit [Orr Gray Gish Funeral Home](#).

**Amanda Pauline Reed**

Amanda Pauline Sipes Reed, 69, passed away July 23, 2022.

Amanda was born Jan. 4, 1953, in Pampa, Texas, to Buford and Janita Sipes.

She was preceded in death by her parents; son Tad Brian Reed; and brothers Johnny and Glenn Sipes.

Amanda is survived by her husband Rex T. Reed; son Zachary Reed; and several in-laws.

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

**William Parker**

William "Bill" Bryan Parker, 74, passed away July 20, 2022.

Bill was born Nov. 4, 1947, in Lawton, Okla., to John Neal Parker and Gladys Marie (Kirk) Parker.

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

Bill is survived by his wife Beverly; son Bryan D. Parker and spouse Molina; daughter Kimberly A. Richardson and spouse John; brothers Jim Parker and John Parker; sister Carol Gardner; and grandchildren John Ed Richardson, Dadrian Richardson, and Bobbi Parker.

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

**Sheryl Bichsel**

Sheryl Bichsel, 56, passed away July 24, 2022.

Sheryl was born Sept. 20, 1965, in Colorado Springs, Colo., to Bobby "Bob" Neil Cecil and Sheila (O'Neal) Cecil.

She was preceded in death by her father; the father of Hanna Wade Bichsel; her cousin David Cecil; and paternal grandparents Dora and Burness Cecil.

Sheryl is survived by mother; stepfather Richard; her children Ricky Lee Gragg, Jr., Ryan Neal Gragg and spouse Kristen, Stephanie Winesburg and spouse Jacob, and Hanna Bichsel; her sister from another mother Christina Riley and spouse Ronny; grandchildren Maddyson Gragg, Ricky Gragg, III, Tarek Gragg, Rowan Gragg, Alexis Gragg, Truth Frazier, Tingleigh Gragg, Bentlee Gragg, Ayden Martin, Addison Martin, Logan Winesburg, and Greyson Winesburg; her second mom Brenda Mitchell; sister Leslie Crank and spouse Gary; brother Bobby Cecil, Jr.; aunts and uncles June and John Cecil, and Bill and June Cecil; nieces and nephew Shawnda Lane, Mariah Hawkins, Caitlyn Spears, and Austin Cecil and girlfriend Nikkie; dear friends Jill Mabry, Jan Geis, Fonda Robinson and spouse Zack, Melinda Brinlee, and Suzy Miskovsky; and numerous other family and friends.

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

**Ben Pushmataha McCarley**

Ben Pushmataha McCarley, 96, passed away July 26, 2022.

Ben was born Jan. 13, 1926, in McAlester, Okla., to Dr. Tracey Holland McCarley and Agnes Ainsworth McCarley.

He was preceded in death by his wife Alice.

Ben is survived by his children Hannah, Betsy, Ben, and Luke; 10 grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; and many friends.

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

**Robert Caldwell Crosby**

Robert Caldwell Crosby, 77, passed away June 6, 2022.

Robert was born April 24, 1945, in McAlester, Okla., to Lucille and William Crosby.

He was preceded in death by his parents; father-in-law John McConnell; and brother-in-law Mickey Wakely.

Robert is survived by his wife Kate; sister Carol Eberly; children Craig and spouse Kathy, Todd and spouse Kim, and Ashley and spouse Bob; and grandchildren Kendall, Rylan, Cole, Chloe, Charlie, Bobby, and Lily.

For the full obituary, please visit [Porter Loring Mortuary North](#).

**Pamela Kay Lotts**

Pamela "Pam" Kay Edwards Lotts, also known as Summer Flower, 65, passed away July 15, 2022.

Pam was born Sept. 14, 1956, in Corona, Calif., to Clarence Edwards and Mavis Edwards.

She was preceded in death by her life partner David George Wiseman; sister Angela "Angie" Edwards; her father; and grandmother Helen Crabtree.

Pam is survived by her daughter Jamine Starr Wiseman; son Anthony Merlin Lotts; her mother; and brother Paul Edwards.

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

**Floyd D. Simmons**

Floyd D. Simmons, 102, passed away July 26, 2022.

Floyd was born Feb. 21, 1920, in Hontubby, Okla., to Samuel and Edna (Jefferson) Simmons.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Eeva (Brooks); sisters Cleo Sanders, Jewell Roop, and Lola Lynn; brothers James Simmons and Estel Simmons; and brother-in-law John Balentine.

Floyd is survived by his wife Madine; daughter Becky Seale and spouse Rob; granddaughter Tierney Seale; grandson Aaron Seale and spouse Joy; nephews and nieces Gene Sanders, Perry Sanders, Judy Graham, Mike Sanders, Jaydee Sanders, Linda Bilbrey, Jim Sanders, J.B. (Jack) Lynn, June Cass, Gary Ollie, Jim Simmons, Kathy Forehand, Linda Roop, Leah Wilding, Tina Myers, Bernie Lynwood Brooks, Roma Heystek, Edward Sachleben, Jan Perkinson, Terry Brooks, and Lisa Brooks; numerous cousins; other loves ones; and a host of friends that loved him very much.

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

**Teresa Ann Willige**

Teresa Ann (Overstreet) Willige, 71, passed away June 20, 2022.

Teresa was born June 21, 1950, in Oklahoma City, Okla., to Muriel Freeman Overstreet and Omega (Cannon) Overstreet.

She was preceded in death by her parents; infant daughter Omega Lee Willige; mother-in-law and father-in-law August "Junior" W. Willige Jr. and Wanda Lee (Kennedy) Willige; brother-in-law William "Bill" Ralph Willige; nephew William "Todd" Willige; aunt Karen (Cannon) Grant; as well as many aunts, uncles, greats, and grands on both sides of the family.

Teresa is survived by her husband Augie; son August "Dusty W. Willige IV and spouse Bethany; daughter April D. Willige; grandchildren Andrew and spouse Kelsey, Aubry, and Aidan; sister Ellen Tullius and spouse Jeff; brother David Overstreet; aunt Henrietta Elmore; and many nieces, nephews, cousins and countless family by affection.

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

**Tracey Allen Williams**

Tracey Allen Williams, 50, passed away Aug. 2, 2022.

Tracey was born Feb. 16, 1972, in Talihina, Okla., to Joe Alton Williams, Sr. and Cecelia (Baker) Williams.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Jerry Williams and David Williams; and nephew Jason Williams.

Tracey is survived by his brothers Joe Williams Jr., and Jimmie Williams and Cathy Foster; sister-in-law Josephine Williams; uncle Arnold Baker and spouse Patti; aunt Christine Baker; nieces Cari Crose and spouse Rick, and Krissy Jo Martin and spouse Joe; nephews Brad Williams and spouse Brenda, and James Williams; great-nephews and great-niece Devan Crose, Dayton Crose, Chase Martin, Kolbie Williams, and Charity Williams; special friend and mentor Jennifer Woods; numerous great-great-nieces and nephews; along with other family and friends.

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

**Genevieve Marie Newman**

Genevieve Marie Newman passed away July 25, 2022.

Genevieve was born July 25, 1922, to Zachary and Jandy Newman.

She is survived by her parents; sisters Callia, Leah, Frances, Esther, and Agnes; and grandparents Dan and Nelda Newman, and Jay and Judy Smith.

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

**Rodger Lee Carpenter**

Rodger Lee Carpenter, 78, passed away July 28, 2022.

Rodger was born Jan. 11, 1944, in Verden, Okla., to James Thomas Carpenter and Leona Viola Rosegrant Carpenter.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers Raymond Carpenter, Wayne Carpenter, James Dillard Carpenter, and Donald Ray Carpenter.

Rodger is survived by his wife Doris Virginia Chapman Carpenter; sister Leona Ruth Carpenter Stropes; son Paul David Carpenter Phillips and spouse Ibeth; stepdaughter Lucille Annette Gist Wood; grandchildren Paul Joseph Carpenter Alain, Gabriela Maria Carpenter Alain, Alexandra Sheena Carpenter Alain, Paige Nichole Kolander Gist, and Rex Landon Wood Gist; as well as many more loving relatives and friends.

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

**Ramona Jean Baker**

Ramona Jean (Billy) Baker, 82, passed away July 26, 2022.

Ramona was born Nov. 18, 1939, in Tahlequah, Okla., to Marlin and Josephine (Carney) Billy.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Aryon Elum Baker Sr.; sons Marlin Baker, Aryon Elum Baker Jr., Terry Baker, and Ricky Baker; and siblings Ruby Terrell, Linda Mitchell, and Marlin Billy Jr.

Ramona is survived by her daughters JoAnna Baker and boyfriend David Gill, Michelle Lowe and spouse Donny, Stephanie Wingfield and spouse Robert, Tina Baker, Cheryl Deramo and spouse Shane Sr., and Carol Baker; son Jeff Baker and spouse Sherrie; 30 grandchildren; 55 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; sister Ima Jean Terrell; and numerous nieces, nephew, and relatives.

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

**George Lee Waldron**

George Lee Waldron, 84, passed away July 21, 2022.

George was born Sept. 19, 1937, in Crowder, Okla., to Eddie Jack and Eva Holly (Cornell) Waldron.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife Shirley (Poses) Waldron; brothers Eddie Waldron and Alonzo Waldron; sister Margie Waldron; and grandson CW2 Randy Lee Billings.

George is survived by daughters Shelia A. Boyd, and Eva May Cooper and spouse Richard; son Kenneth L. Waldron and spouse Maria; grandchildren Scotty J. Woodral and spouse Frankie, Brian A. Boyd and spouse Jolene, Zachariah D. Chase, Caleb S. Chase and spouse Amaris, Stephan A. Boyd and spouse Micaela, Lydia A. Huynh and spouse Tyson, Maya G. Waldron, Travis Waldron and spouse Lacie, and Bethany Weaver and spouse David; great-grandchildren Penelope L. Woodral, Adaline G. Woodral, Leona S. Woodral, Brianna M., Boyd, Brady E. Boyd, Monica M. Boyd, Yentl M. Chase, Amira R. Chase, Ziya A. Chase, Azari Elisa Chase, Zella Bella Chase, Avonlea G. Huynh, Aubrey Waldron, Brooklyn Waldron, Kinley Waldron, Blakey Weaver, and Jayden Weaver; numerous nieces and nephews; great-nieces and great nephews; a host of in-laws; and family and friends.

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

**Patricia Joe McClelland**

Patricia Joe McClelland, 72, passed away July 26, 2022.

Patricia was born May 14, 1950, in Hugo, Okla., to Vernon D. Locke and Betty Jo Cearley.

She was preceded in death by her parents; stepfather Clyde W. Lowery Sr.; sister Debbie Haines; brothers-in-law Jimmy Haines and Harold Oiler.

Patricia is survived by her children Stephanie Moreno and spouse Mario, and Sammy McClelland and spouse Lisa; siblings Clyde Lowery and spouse Phyllis, Annette Harrison and spouse Gary, Yona Fitzgerald and spouse James, and Donna Oiler; grandchildren Kaitlyn DeFilippis and spouse Anthony, Michael Moreno, Natalie Moreno, Meagan McClelland, Abriana McClelland, Jacob McClelland, Wesley Mattox, and Jason Mattox; great-granddaughter Danielle DeFilippis; and many nieces, nephews, and loved ones.

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

**Catherine Sue Killgore**

Catherine Sue (Husband) Killgore, 79, passed away July 1, 2022.

Sue was born June 5, 1943, to James Alexander Husband and Genevieve Winn Husband.

She was preceded in death by her parents.

Sue is survived by her Rodney Killgore; her children Charley, Gayla, Kris, Gena, Mercedes, Elisa and Erik; 14 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

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

**Doris Oleta Moffatt**

Doris Oleta Moffatt, 100, passed away July 30, 2022.

Doris was born May 3, 1922, in Atoka, Okla., to Edward and Lucy (Willard) Buckholts.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Harry Moffatt; daughter Pricella Mayton; and sister Ilene Buckholts.

Doris is survived by her daughter Ketrena Gross and spouse Steve; son George Moffatt and spouse Susan; grandchildren Joe Moffatt, Julie Dikeman, Mike Wheeler, Melodie Pardue, and Scott Wheeler; and a lengthy list of great-grandchildren from many generations.

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

**Dewey Alexander Kirkpatrick**

Dewey Alexander Kirkpatrick, 96, passed away July 31, 2022.

Dewey was born Sept. 16, 1925, in Sulfur, Okla., to Naomi Carson and Dewey M. Kirkpatrick.

He was preceded in death by his wife Hedwig I. Ziebart; his parents; grandmother Dora Mae Carson; and half-brother Harold Kirkpatrick.

Dewey is survived by daughters Doris Lucas and spouse Dan, and Sylvia Strzeimieczny and spouse Gary; grandchildren Jayson Lucas and spouse Kayla, Jennifer Hansen and spouse Matthew, and Justin Lucas and spouse Misty; great-grandchildren Zach Lucas and spouse Amber, Wolf Lucas and spouse Judith, Madison Lucas, Spencer Lucas, Fletcher Hansen, and Georgia Hansen; and great-great-grandchildren Jameson and Evelyn Lucas.

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

**Obituary Policy**

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

The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes.

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

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

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

Send official obituary notices to:

Biskinik  
PO Box 1210  
Durant OK 74702  
or email: [biskinik@choctawnation.com](mailto:biskinik@choctawnation.com)



## ITI FABVSSA

## A New Chahta Homeland: A History by the Decade, 1980-1990

Iti Fabvssa is currently running a series that covers the span of Oklahoma Choctaw history. By examining each decade since the Choctaw government arrived in our new homelands using Choctaw-created documents, we gain a better understanding of Choctaw ancestors' experiences and how they made decisions that have led us into the present.

This month covers the 1980-1990 period in which Choctaw Nation expanded into gaming endeavors and embarked on a new era of Choctaw economic development that is the foundation for what Choctaw Nation does today.

When Chief David Gardner was first elected chief in 1975, he had a long list of tasks to bring Choctaw Nation into its new era of governance. His death at the young age of 38 left his successor Hollis Roberts with numerous tasks to turn Gardner's vision for the Nation into reality. Chief Roberts' previous experience in the Oklahoma House of Representatives and public profile in tribal affairs made him well suited to guide the Choctaw Nation's venture into a new era in a vastly transformed world. Most important was the creation of a new constitution suited to the demands of a new economic and political landscape.

After the passing of the 1979 constitution that was discussed in last month's article, some Choctaws made their opposition to it known. In the late 1970s, a grassroots group of Choctaws filed a lawsuit regarding the constitutionality of the 1979 constitution. This was partly a response to a Supreme Court ruling that found that neighboring Muscogee "Creek" Nation's pre-statehood constitution was still valid and had to be followed when revising the constitution. Chief Roberts responded to the lawsuit by Choctaw community members by pushing the General Council to draft a new constitution that took the 1860 constitution into consideration before the judge could rule on the constitutionality of the 1979 constitution. Before that draft could be completed, the judge ruled that the Choctaw Nation's 1860 constitution was still in effect and instructed that a committee should be formed to create a new constitution based on the 1860 version and to take in community input.

The revised constitution had significant differences from the 1860 and 1979 constitutions. By 1980, the political landscape of the Choctaw



Image Courtesy of Choctaw Cultural Center, Durant, Oklahoma, Biskinik Collection 004.

Choctaw Bingo Palace used buses to bring in patrons from all over to play in Durant.

Nation had gone through massive changes and many parts of the 1860 constitution were not feasible for the twentieth century. The extensive court system and a bicameral legislature (House and Senate) that Choctaw Nation used to operate were not financially possible at the time. The state of Oklahoma had since come into being and was a powerful actor that often challenged the tribes, which it had sought to displace politically. The new draft introduced the appointed position of the Assistant Chief and new criteria for tribal citizenship, which became based on lineal descent from by blood Choctaws listed on the final Dawes Rolls. The modifications between the 1979 constitution and the new draft were a bit more minor in comparison. It changed the number of Council representatives from fifteen to twelve. Previously, three of the representatives were at-large members, which represented Choctaw people not living within the reservation boundaries. It also staggered council member elections, so only half of the council was up for election every two years. Four years later, in 1983, Choctaw voters approved the new constitution.

With a new constitution and elected council in place, Choctaw Nation could focus on providing for tribal members and protecting Choctaw sovereignty. It worked with the federal government to allow Choctaw Nation to take over Indian Health Services

with its own healthcare system that it managed. Meanwhile, the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority worked to provide homes. The Choctaw Nation also went to court to defend our lands and rights. Along with the Chickasaw and Cherokee Nations, Choctaw Nation filed a lawsuit against the federal government regarding the Arkansas riverbeds. The Tribes argued that their respective removal treaties granted them ownership of the dry lands that later appeared on account of changes to the river over time. This eventually resulted in a 2002 settlement of \$40 million, with half paid to Choctaw/Chickasaw Nations and the other half to the Cherokee Nation.

As Choctaw Nation worked to expand its services and reach, Indian gaming was taking off in other Native communities and proving to be an effective way to sustain economic development. Chief Roberts pushed for the opening of a gaming facility, starting with bingo. It was not immediately accepted by Choctaw community members, and it took sustained effort to gain support. One former council member recalled discussing a bingo gaming proposal with constituents in his district and many opposed it on moral grounds. As a result, he voted against one of the first council bills that would have established gaming in Choctaw Nation. But Chief Roberts asked to meet with those community members to discuss the new opportu-

nities gaming could bring. This convinced many people to change their minds and soon the bill was passed.

In 1987, Choctaw Nation opened the Choctaw Bingo Palace in Durant, Oklahoma, near the intersection of Highway 69 and 75 – not far from where today's casino-resort stands. What used to be a cattle pasture quickly became a hub of activity. For many who worked at Choctaw Bingo, the time when it was open brings back fond memories. Former employees remember the family-like atmosphere and how some developed lifelong friendships with bingo patrons. They recall packed weekends with patrons bussed in from neighboring states, regulars who brought lucky trinkets to line up on their tables, the money air machine booth where winners sometimes got a chance to catch cash, and how the first million-dollar bingo win in the United States was at the Choctaw Bingo Hall.

Just as it was envisioned, Choctaw Bingo created new opportunities for many Choctaws in need of a job or even a first job. Current District 9 councilman James Dry's first job while at Southeastern Oklahoma State University was flipping burgers at the Choctaw Bingo Palace. Other former Bingo employees can be found still working for the Choctaw Nation. To open the bingo hall, Choctaw Nation took out a loan which it paid off ahead of schedule in part because of its success. The revenue from this initial investment and other ventures helped provide Choctaw Nation with much-needed funds that allowed it to expand services for tribal members and assert its sovereignty in ways akin to the 19th-century form.

Next month, we will conclude the 'A New Chahta Homeland' series with the 1990-2000 period in which Choctaw Nation transitioned into casino gaming and developed some of its first compacts with the state of Oklahoma.

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

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

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

## Jim Thorpe reinstated as sole Olympic champion

**SALT LAKE CITY, (July 15, 2022)** – The International Olympic Committee (IOC) reinstates Jim Thorpe as the sole champion of the decathlon and pentathlon in the 1912 Olympic Games.

For 110 years, advocates for the Sac and Fox and Potawatomi athlete, including two American Presidents, have urged the IOC to reinstate Jim Thorpe as the sole champion in his events. Bright Path Strong (BPS) [www.brightpathstrong.org](http://www.brightpathstrong.org) is honored to have played a part in removing this injustice that tarnished Thorpe's enduring legacy.

IOC President, Thomas Bach, said, "Thanks to the great engagement of Bright Path Strong a solution could be found. This is a most exceptional and unique situation. It is addressed by an extraordinary gesture of fair play from the concerned National Olympic Committees."

Anita Thorpe, granddaughter of Jim Thorpe, Vice Chairman/Sac and Fox Gaming Commission, and BPS Honorary Board Member, proclaimed, "A moment 110 years in the making to finally hear the words officially spoken again, 'Jim Thorpe is the sole winner of the 1912 decathlon and pentathlon.' A glorious time of celebrations to all of his friends, family, and supporters. Hooray!!!"

## Honors Restored

Bright Path Strong commends the IOC for setting the record straight and fully reinstating Jim Thorpe. "We are so grateful this nearly 110-year-old injustice has finally been corrected, and there is no confusion about the most remarkable athlete in history," said Nedra Darling, BPS co-founder and citizen of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation.

In 1913, the IOC wrongfully stripped Jim of his wins after it was revealed that he played minor league baseball prior to the 1912 Summer Games, declaring he had infringed the rules regarding amateurism in place at the time. In 1982, the IOC returned replica gold medals to the Thorpe family and designated him a co-champion in the official records, though he dominated the competition, and his opponents only reluctantly accepted the gold medals reallocated to them.

Dennis Hendricks, council member of Tuolumne Band of Me Wuk Indians and BPS Board Member said, "Jim Thorpe faced seemingly insurmountable odds on and off the field. He represented this country before it even recognized Native Americans as citizens but he never gave up. He was an inspiration then and he is an inspiration now. Today is yet another victory for this great hero."

## A Team Effort

On July 15, 2020, Bright Path Strong and its Tribal partners launched a major campaign to right the greatest injustice in Olympic history and have Jim Thorpe reinstated as the sole champion in his events. This included an online petition and support from National Congress of American Indians, Native American Rights Fund, National Native Boarding School Coalition, Indian Gaming Association, Native American Finance Officers Association, Amateur Athletic Union, Pro Football Hall of Fame, The Doug Williams Center, and the unprecedented efforts of IOC Representative to the U.S., Ms. Anita DeFrantz, who became an ally after learning how Thorpe was wrongfully stripped of his gold medals while a student at Carlisle Indian Industrial School where he "survived an education designed to rob him of his culture."

"This was made possible by supporters from Indian Country and from around the world," said Chris Taylor, citizen of the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana and BPS co-founder. "This could not have been accomplished without our Tribal partners: Tuolumne Band of Me Wuk Indians, Chicken Ranch Rancheria Me-Wuk Indians of California, Tonto Apache Tribe, The Mohegan Tribe, Sealaska, Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation, Bear River Band of the Rohnerville Rancheria, and Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians."

Chairman Lloyd Mathiesen of Chicken Ranch Rancheria said, "We are excited this injustice has finally been corrected and are proud to be a part of changing history and helping tell Jim's story. Jim's resilience and perseverance stands as a beacon to our youth and shows them anything is possible."

Nedra Darling concludes, "I pray that Jim, his family, and our ancestors are celebrating that the truth has been upheld today, on this 110th anniversary of Jim being awarded his Olympic gold medals. This is a day for great celebration."

## About Bright Path Strong

Inspired by Jim's name of Wa-Tho-Huk which translates to "Bright Path," Bright Path Strong is a Native-lead non-profit organization whose mission is to continue Jim Thorpe's legacy of community service. For more information visit [www.brightpathstrong.org](http://www.brightpathstrong.org).



Photo Courtesy of the International Olympic Committee

Jim Thorpe, stripped of his 1912 gold medals because he'd been paid to play minor league baseball, was recently reinstated as the sole winner of that year's Olympic decathlon and pentathlon by the International Olympic Committee.

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## CHOCTAW

COUNTRY MARKET



# Nation, others offer assistance to help you quit smoking

By Chris Jennings

The most common cause of death among American Indian and Alaskan Natives (AI/AN) is heart disease, with cancer following a close second, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Both causes of death can be partially attributed to commercial tobacco use.

One of the causes is that a disproportionate amount of AI/AN use commercial tobacco products compared to

other ethnic groups in the United States. In 2014, the CDC reported that 26.1% of all AI/AN adults were cigarette smokers, a much higher rate than 19.4% for whites, 18.3% for African Americans, 12.1% for Hispanics and 9.6% for Asians.

For many AI/NA, smoking starts early. AI/AN high schoolers have the highest current cigarette smoking rate of any other race or ethnicity at 16.2%, compared to 5.8% overall. 3.7% of AI/NI middle schoolers currently smoke

cigarettes compared to 2.3% overall.

Studies often point to flavored tobacco products or e-cigarettes as a reason youth start and continue smoking. E-cigarettes, vapes and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS) contain a liquid that is heated into an aerosol the user inhales. ENDS come in many shapes and sizes. They can look like cigarettes, pens, USB devices and other delivery systems. Some are disposable, and some are reusable.

On September 22, 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), under authority granted by the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act, prohibited cigarettes from containing any “characterizing flavor,” including candy, fruit, and alcohol flavors. These flavorings in tobacco products can make them more appealing to youth.

However, the prohibition exempted menthol and tobacco flavors then and did not apply to non-cigarette tobacco products. In April of 2022, the FDA proposed rules prohibiting menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars to prevent youth from starting to use commercial tobacco products.

According to the CDC, in 2021, 80.2% of high school students and 74.6% of middle school students who used tobacco prod-

ucts in the past 30 days reported using a flavored tobacco product. That number increases to 85.8% and 79.2%, respectively, for ENDS.

There’s no denying that commercial tobacco usage and ENDS are a problem for Native communities. If you use one of these and want to quit, the Nation is here to help. Tribal members can participate in the Tobacco Cessation Clinic, a 16-week program that provides medicine and counseling to help quit smoking.

“It’s a program where basically, the patient wants to quit smoking or is interested in quitting smoking. We have over-the-counter, non-prescription nicotine replacement therapy. We also have a couple of medications that we can use to help people stop smoking,” said Heidi Hackett with the Choctaw Nation Pharmacy.

During the program, there are weekly phone calls and monthly visits to follow up on how things are going.

According to Hackett, they offer support during the visits.

“If they’re struggling with getting rid of that one last cigarette, we go over different habits that they can teach themselves instead of having a cigarette,” Hackett said.

Hackett says they can offer help with changing the routine or getting rid

of stress.

“We just touch base on those points to see if we can help them implement something different into their daily routines that help them get rid of that habit,” she said.

For more information on how to quit smoking, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/quit-smoking/>. If you’re interested in participating in the Tobacco Cessation Program, you can talk to your health care provider, who will set up a consult.

The cessation program does require monthly in-person visits during the program, but there are other options for helping to quit smoking if you don’t live near enough to make the trip.

The Indian Health Service (IHS) has collaborated with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to customize a smoke-free text messaging program for AI/AN.

Smokers who are ready to quit can enroll in the free 6-8 week program by texting NATIVE to 47848. The user will receive one to five messages per day and can receive additional quitting support by texting one of SmokefreeTXT’s keywords, such as CRAVE, MOOD, OR SLIP.

In Oklahoma, you can go to [www.okhelpline.com](http://www.okhelpline.com) or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW to receive free help with quitting smoking, including free nicotine replacement therapy patches or lozenges for those 18 and over. They also have options for those 13 to 17 years old.

The American Lung Association has the Freedom from Smoking program, helping people quit smoking for over 41 years. More information can be found at [www.lung.org/quit-smoking](http://www.lung.org/quit-smoking).

Help is available to quit smoking, but you must take the first step to live a longer and healthier life.



## Blueberry BBQ Chicken

- ½ cup diced onion
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 cups frozen wild blueberries
- ¼ cup ketchup
- ¼ cup balsamic vinegar
- ¼ cup dark brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 (6-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts

### Preparation

1. Prepare and heat grill.
2. On a stove, heat a medium saucepan to medium-high heat. Add olive oil and sauté onion for 2 minutes, or until translucent. Add blueberries, ketchup, balsamic vinegar, brown sugar and salt. Stir well. Bring to a simmer and cook, occasionally stirring, for 4 minutes.
3. Use an immersion blender (or transfer to a blender) to blend until smooth. Transfer ½ cup of sauce to one bowl and reserve for serving. Transfer the remaining sauce to a second bowl for grilling.
4. Pound chicken breasts to flatten to ½-inch thickness. Place flattened chicken breasts on the prepared grill. Cook for 5 minutes on one side, turn and grill for another 5 minutes.
5. Spread blueberry barbecue sauce evenly over chicken; grill 1 minute.
6. Turn chicken and spoon a larger portion of sauce evenly over the other side; grill for 1 minute longer. Chicken is cooked when the internal temperature reaches 165°F.
7. Serve with reserved ½ cup blueberry barbecue sauce.



## Developing early healthy habits for life long health

By Dr. Patrick McIntosh D.O., Family Medicine Resident, CNHSA

Obesity has become one of the most significant public health problems in the United States, and the Choctaw Nation also struggles with this health condition.

Obesity is defined as a BMI higher than 30. BMI is calculated with a person’s height and weight, which means the more one weighs, the higher their BMI.

Childhood obesity rates have also continued to increase, now affecting over 14.7 million children and adolescents in the United States. This has more than tripled since the early 1970s. The rate of obesity by age group is 12.7% in 2-5 year-olds, 20.7% in 6-11 year-olds, and 22.2% in 12-19 year-olds in the United States.

Why is obesity a problem, and specifically, why is childhood obesity a problem? Childhood obesity is a serious problem that puts children and adolescents at risk for poor health earlier in life. The immediate consequences of obesity include low self-esteem, depression, and high blood pressure. What can be more concerning is that childhood obesity can continue into adulthood and is associated with uncontrolled high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, joint pain, breathing problems such as asthma and sleep apnea, cancer, and even premature death.

The Choctaw population is already at an increased risk of these health conditions than the general population of the United States, so Choctaw children who are obese are at even greater risk for earlier health problems.

What can be done to prevent or reverse childhood obesity? Body weight is all about balancing how much food a person eats and how much a person exercises.

Some ways to improve eating habits are:

- Don’t skip breakfast – this may seem counterintuitive, but eating breakfast is associated with better memory and attention span, healthier body weight and overall nutrition.
- Keep healthy snacks in the home - fruits, vegetables, cheese, and whole grains are great for children. Kids eat what is in the house; don’t give them to option of soda and cookies.
- Be aware of portion sizes – It’s easy for kids, and adults, to eat everything on their plate.

Remember to be mindful of how much food is on the dinner plate. At the end of a meal, one should be satisfied – not full or “stuffed” like after a thanksgiving meal.

- Eat as a family – Eating meals together can help everyone eat healthier, is a fun way to explore new foods together and is excellent for family conversations.
- Keep meals screen free – Eating in front of a screen, TV or phone can lead to overeating, so best to avoid the screens, especially during family meals.

Those are some tips on the eating side but remember, obesity is a balancing act between what a person eats and how much energy is used, so let’s encourage kids and teens to use more energy!

Monitor screen time – This one is difficult; kids have had more access to screens now than ever before, and it doesn’t appear to be slowing down. Try and limit screen time to no more than two hours a day. Use that extra time practicing a sport, riding a bike, or learning a new skill.

Regular exercise – when kids play outside, they will move around naturally, find that activity they enjoy and encourage them along the way. The more they move, the more energy they use.

Sleep – Encourage kids and teens to get enough sleep, ideally 8-10 hours daily. Cut out that evening movie after family dinner, encourage a regular bedtime and again limit screen access in bed like phones or TV.

Obesity is not something that happens overnight, and it’s not something that can be fixed in a week. A sensible diet plan seeks to decrease weight gradually, usually at a rate of one to three pounds a week, so do not become discouraged if, after a month, weight only decreases by five pounds. That is a healthy rate. Diet and exercise are habits that need to be developed, it’s work and does not come easy to anyone, but if kids see their parents making efforts, they too will make an effort and develop healthy habits along the way.

Remember, the goal is to instill healthy habits in children, not necessarily weight loss. If healthy habits are created, weight loss will follow.

*This column was written by a guest contributor from the Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority.*

### Choctaw Nation Health Clinic Contact Information

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

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

### 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 2022**

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

<b>ANTLERS</b> 400 S.W. “O” ST., 580-298-6443 <i>Food demo September 8</i>
<b>BROKEN BOW</b> 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842 <i>Food demo September 13</i>
<b>DURANT</b> 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773 <i>Food demo September 15</i>
<b>MCALESTER</b> 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716 <i>Food demo September 20</i>
<b>POTEAU</b> 100 Kerr Ave., 918-649-0431 <i>Food demo September 22</i>

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*

### WIC OFFICE LOCATIONS

LOCATION	DAYS	HOURS
<b>Antlers</b> 580-298-3161	Every Tuesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Atoka</b> 580-889-5825	Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Battiest</b> 580-241-5458	1st Tuesday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Broken Bow</b> 580-584-2746	Monday - Friday (except 1st Tuesday & 2nd Thursday of the Month)	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Durant</b> 580-920-2100 ext 83852	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Heavener</b> 918-974-1820	Tuesday, Thursday & Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Hugo</b> 580-326-9707	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Idabel</b> 580-286-2600 ext 4113	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>McAlester</b> 918-423-6335	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Poteau</b> 918-647-4585	Mon, Wed & Friday Tuesday & Thursday	8am - 4:30pm 8:30am - 5pm
<b>Smithville</b> 580-244-3289	2nd Thursday of the Month	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Spiro</b> 918-962-3832	Thursday & Friday (3rd, 4th & 5th Wednesdays of the month)	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Stigler</b> 918-967-4211	Monday - Tuesday (the first two Wednesdays)	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Talihina</b> 918-567-7000 ext 6792	Monday - Friday	8:00am - 4:30pm
<b>Wilburton</b> 580-642-7588	Monday and Wednesday	8:30am - 4:00pm
<b>Mobile Van</b> 580-380-5679	Dates & times vary due to weather & travel (Service in Boswell, Coalgate and Clayton)	

**Choctaw Nation** Health Services



## Planning ahead can make time of death less stressful for family members

By Chris Jennings

The death of a family member is a trying time for many. Several things can be done beforehand that can ease the process, though. Knowing what's involved and what needs to happen before death can take some stress away from family members so they can grieve and heal in a healthier way.

Three general steps need to happen after death: a funeral home will prepare the body; a ceremony will often be held but is not completely necessary; and the interment or burying or cremation of the body.

State regulations vary on what needs to happen at the time of death. The Texas Funeral Service Commission, which also serves Oklahoma, says when a death occurs, a coroner, Justice of the Peace, or attending physician must make a determination of death; locate a decedent's letter of direction, funeral contract, insurance policy and/or will. A Report of Death and a death certificate is also required by law.

More information on funerals specific to each state, retail pricing and other helpful information can be found through the Funeral Consumers Alliance at [www.funerals.org](http://www.funerals.org).

Funeral homes can assist with taking care of all of this, along with pre-planning or pre-paying for a funeral.

Pre-planning is different from pre-paying. By pre-planning your funeral, you're ensuring family members or the funeral home of your choice know what you want. By pre-paying, you get the planning and take the burden of payment away from family members.

There are downsides to pre-paying, though. You could move away from the area of the funeral home you paid, or the funeral home could go out of business.

If paying for your funeral is something you want to do but don't want to work with a specific funeral home, you can talk to your bank about setting up an account payable on death.

These accounts will release funds to a beneficiary and give the resources covered to pay for the funeral you want. You can make deposits into this account regularly to save up for the funeral, allowing the person handling the arrangements to talk to several funeral homes and negotiate a price. Many funeral homes will work with family members on pricing.

If paying for a funeral is burdening your family, then the Choctaw Nation may be able to help.

"We pay, basically, towards the financial portion of a burial to the funeral home," said Clinton Rogers with the Choctaw Nation Tribal Burial Programs.

However, Rogers says a common misconception is that this payment is an entitlement.

"We do not pay the family, and there's not supposed to be any reimbursements from the funeral home to the family. So, it's not an entitlement program where everybody's automatically entitled to the assistance," said Rogers.

The maximum payout to a funeral home is \$2500. The Nation looks at the resources on hand to determine how much will be paid. Things like cash on hand for the deceased, burial policies and insurance policies are considered resources to pay for funeral costs. After these resources are used up, the Nation can help with the remaining costs, including working with the funeral home to reduce prices.

There is an application process to get assistance with a funeral.

"Once the application has been approved for your referral, the program will pay a specific portion ordered directly to the funeral home. Our staff will work with the funeral home to obtain all required documentation for expenses to help lessen the burden on your family during this time," Rogers said.

The following guidelines must be met to be eligible for funeral services through the Nations Burial Program:

- Applicants must notify our office at the time of the tribal member's death.
- Applications must be received in our office within 30 days of passing.
- Choctaw tribal membership and CDIB card (will be verified through our membership office) for the deceased.
- A valid Social Security Card for the deceased is required.
- Submit final funeral home itemized statement with an unpaid balance.
- Submit a certified copy of death certificate.

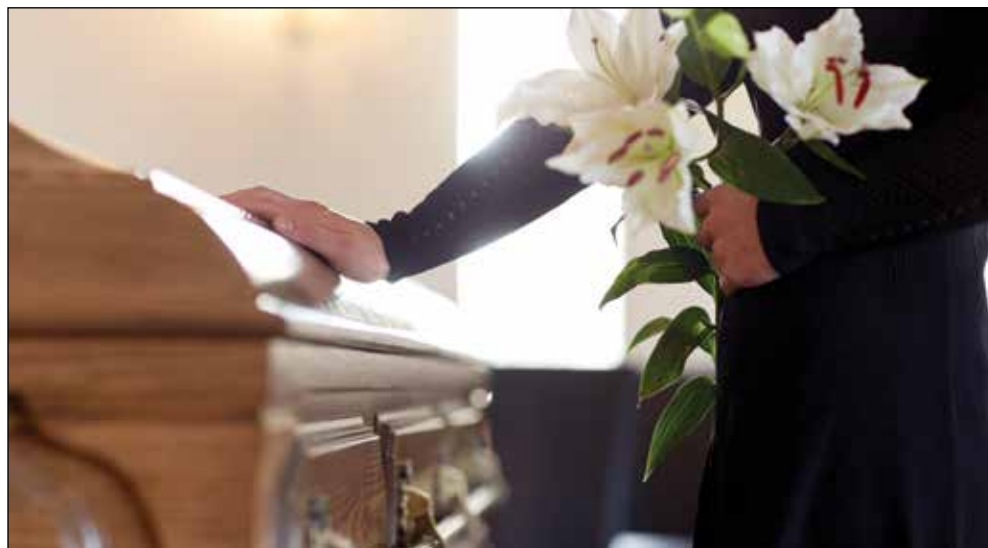


Photo Provided

By planning and pre-arranging funeral services, you can lessen the stress on family members when they need to start the grieving process. The Choctaw Nation Tribal Burial program and Veterans Advocacy can offer some assistance to qualified families.

If you would like to incorporate some Choctaw culture during your funeral, the Tribal Burial Program has links to recorded hymns in Choctaw.

The Burial Program can also assist with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Burial Assistance Program. The Nation is authorized to use this funding when applicable. The BIA program is intended for families with no resources available. Funeral homes are obligated to accept these funds as payment in full for service rendered. Services are limited and can't be altered in any way.

Certain guidelines must be followed for the BIA program:

- Must reside within the Choctaw service area.
- Must be a member of any federally recognized tribe, verified by a tribal membership card and have a valid CDIB card.
- The deceased may not have resources (life insurance, veteran's benefits, cash, savings accounts, etc.).
- Residential verification that the deceased has lived within the Choctaw Nation service area for six months before death. Must supply a utility

bill or mail with physical location listed address as proof of residency.

- Proof of income for the deceased.

For more information on Choctaw Burial Services, visit [www.choctawnation.com/burial/](http://www.choctawnation.com/burial/).

If you're a Choctaw veteran, you and your spouse are eligible to be interred at the Veteran's Cemetery at Tvshka Homma. The Choctaw Nation will provide a vault and plot at Tvshka Homma and up to a certain amount for funeral expenses that are paid directly to the funeral home. The Veteran's Advocacy Department will also help with pre-arrangements and completing the headstone applications for the veteran's family.

"Whether it be you, or a spouse, if you both would like to be buried inside the Tvshka Homma Veteran's Cemetery, we can pre-arrange that beforehand and get your wants in line," said Mykiyah Battiest with the Veterans Advocacy department.

Veterans Advocacy can also help request the Choctaw Honor Guard to do a 21-gun salute, play Taps and present an American flag to the family.

More information for veterans can be found at [www.choctawnation.com/services/veteran-advocacy/](http://www.choctawnation.com/services/veteran-advocacy/).

## CNO services benefit Choctaw elders

Continued from 1

The following services can be used by tribal members of any age but are also great resources for elders:

- Choctaw Cultural Center Classes
- Food Distribution Program
- Lawn Services Voucher Program
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)
- Medical Services
- Adult Education
- Choctaw Language Classes
- Food Distribution Program
- Healthy Lifestyles
- LEAP Homes
- Promoting Active Communities Everywhere (PACE)
- Wellness Centers

Some of these programs have eligibility guidelines. Tribal members can find out more about elder services by visiting <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/>.

Choctaw Community Centers are also a place for local elders. Free weekly meals are served to elders at Choctaw Community Centers throughout the Choctaw Nation. Community Centers also offer various opportunities such as volunteer services and fundraising for group trips, games, lessons, etc. Contact your local Choctaw Community Center for more information on how you can take part in community activities.

The Choctaw Nation has long promoted its goal to enhance the lives of all members through opportunities designed to develop healthy and productive lifestyles. There are programs and services available for tribal members of all ages.

For more information on services for all ages, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/>.

## Samantha Crain, Art Market, stickball set for Choctaw Cultural Center

**DURANT, Okla. (Aug. 12, 2022)** – Arts and Culture" is the theme for a day of special programming at the Choctaw Cultural Center on Saturday, Sept. 24. Noted Choctaw singer, musician, songwriter, and poet, Samantha Crain will perform while an Art Market featuring the work of Choctaw artists will take place at the center. Also, a Youth Stickball Tournament will be played on the center Stickball Field.

Crain will take the stage for a one-hour concert at 2 p.m. in the Kowi Chito Theater

of the Choctaw Cultural Center. The show will be followed by a meet-and-greet. Seating is limited with tickets at \$10 in advance at <https://bit.ly/cc-workshop-events>. Any remaining tickets will be available at the door.

Her memorable melodies and an honest storytelling-style have earned Crain two Native American Music Awards and an Indigenous Music Award. Her original music has been critically acclaimed by Rolling Stone, SPIN, and NPR, among others. She has toured extensively both nationally and internationally. Her newest album is "A Small Death."

The Art Market will be set up in the main lobby of the Choctaw Cultural Center. There is no charge to see the art. Works for purchase will include painting, beadwork, sculpture, stained glass, and more.

The Stickball Tournament, for ages 13-17, is expected to draw six teams from across the Choctaw Reservation. Games will run 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the Stickball Field, located north of the center's main building. Parking is ample and admission to the games is complimentary.

Regular admission rates apply to tour the permanent displays and newly opened "Chiefs, Clans & Kin" exhibit. Food and drinks, including traditional Choctaw dishes, will be available for purchase in the Champuli Café. The Hvshi Gift Store also will be open.

For a full listing of the day's activities, visit <https://choctawculturalcenter.com/>. The Choctaw Cultural Center is located at 1919 Hina Hanta Way, in Calera.



Photo Provided

Choctaw singer Samantha Crain brings her original sound to the Choctaw Cultural Center for a concert on September 24.

# Chakta Feast of the Dead

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

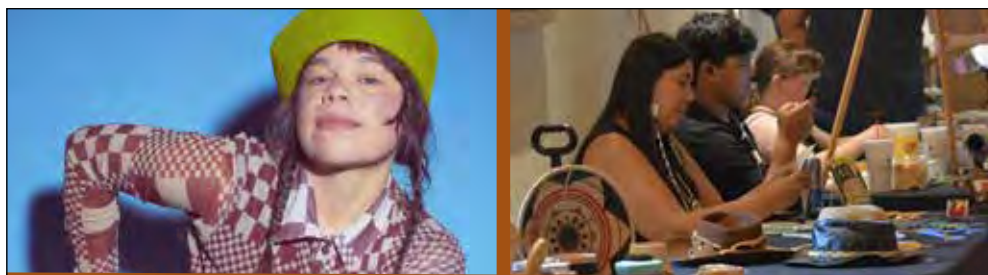
**November 1, 2022 | 6pm - 10pm**

**Choctaw KOA**  
**3650 Enterprise Dr,**  
**Durant, OK 74701**

**Potluck Style Meal: 6pm-7pm**  
(Bring a dish to share)

**Family Heritage Crafts: 7pm-8pm**  
(Bring family photos to scan and copy)

**Memorial Reflection & Ceremony: 8pm- 10pm**  
(Share stories about loved ones)



## ARTS & CULTURE

SEPTEMBER 24

**ART MARKET, SAMANTHA CRAIN CONCERT AND YOUTH STICKBALL TOURNAMENT**

**SCAN CODE TO LEARN MORE!**



# Prepare for your next adventure in Choctaw Country

By Christian Toews

Southeastern Oklahoma is one of the most enjoyable places to spend time outside, enjoy nature or have a getaway in a unique city.

The late summer and early fall are some of the best times to enjoy this beautiful part of the United States. No matter what excursion you are taking, it is always a good idea to ensure you are adequately prepared.

September is National Preparedness Month, and there is no better time to prepare for your next adventure.

### Choose a Destination

The first step is an easy one – pick a place to visit. One of the best resources to help you decide which part of Choctaw Country you want to explore is [www.choctawcountry.com](http://www.choctawcountry.com).

Consider the season you'll be visiting the area, the length of your trip and what activities you might want to do while you are there. If you're visiting one of the many State Parks in Southeastern Oklahoma, research the park's website and social media channels to explore any ranger activities you may want to participate in or their tips for visiting.

### Choose Your Activities and Know The Limits

Once you've found your destination, explore the ways you want to enjoy the area. From driving scenic routes, and kayaking flowing rivers, to backcountry hikes, there are many ways to enjoy the wonder of this part of the Sooner State.

Once again, if you are visiting a State Park, check the requirements for any permits or food storage and disposal policies, group size restrictions, and any park regulations by visiting the park's website or calling the park office. Knowing what you are and aren't allowed to do will help you plan your activities and understand what to bring.

When it comes to being prepared, this is one of the most important steps. Here is a list of essential first aid and emergency items that can help you if you run into minor injuries, sudden weather changes, or unexpected delays. These essentials are only the basic items you should have with you. You may need additional items depending on the activities you've planned.

### Hydration

Staying hydrated is very important, especially as temperatures are warm in Southeastern Oklahoma for much of the year.

Physical activity increases your risk of dehydration. If you plan to be active outdoors (hiking, biking, running, swimming, etc.), especially in hot weather, you should drink water often and before you feel thirsty.

"Drinking plenty of fluids in the heat is vital to avoid heat exhaustion or heat stroke," said Mike Vaught, Chief Ranger with the Oklahoma State Parks Department.



Photos by Christian Toews

Southeastern Oklahoma is a great getaway destination. Before you set out on your next journey to Choctaw Country, it's important to ensure that you are prepared and ready to go.

### Nutrition

You should always be prepared for the possibility of changes to your plans. Be sure to pack some extra food. Salty and easy-to-digest snacks like trail mix, nuts and granola bars work well for outdoor activities.

### First Aid Kit

You should always bring a first aid kit with you. A first aid kit is especially important when venturing into difficult-to-access places such as ATV trails, hiking trails or anywhere else that takes you off the beaten path. Even if you are simply road tripping in your car, bringing a first aid kit is a good idea.

### Navigation

If you are headed out on a hike, to the lake or just out of town for the weekend, you should let someone know your plans.

To avoid getting lost, it is a good idea to use either an app on your phone or a dedicated GPS device to navigate and find your way back to your vehicle or camping spot.

If you become lost without the ability to navigate back to safety, Vaught recommends staying put.

"For both adults and children, it's important to remember that the moment they believe they have become lost on a trail or in the park's remote areas, they need to stop moving, find a safe place and stay put. Staying in place and waiting to be located can really cut the time gap in being found by help," said Vaught.

### Final Steps

The last step is to enjoy your adventure.

While you might have to prepare more or less depending on your chosen excursion, these are some ideas to consider before you head out. Southeastern Oklahoma is packed full of beautiful scenery and friendly people.

No matter where you visit, you will surely enjoy yourself. Don't forget to share your experience on social media by tagging Choctaw Country.



Planning for a camping trip or any other outdoor activity means that the everyday conveniences of home are unavailable. Preparing for your next trip is crucial for staying safe while having a great time.

## STAY INFORMED WITH CHOCTAW NATION

To receive breaking news and important updates

## TEXT HALITO TO 888777

PARTICIPANTS WILL BE PROMPTED TO REPLY TO THE WELCOME TEXT WITH THEIR ZIP CODE TO RECEIVE LOCAL ALERTS. MESSAGE AND DATA RATES MAY APPLY.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

## Choctaw Nation celebrates veterans



Choctaw veterans pose for a photo at the Atoka Veteran's Day celebration.



Crowder veterans Roy Roberts, James Bench, Walter Phelps, Gary Petete, James Charles and Jeffrey Jefferson pose for a photo.



Photos by Judy Allen and Kendra Germany-Wall  
Pictured are veterans William Tonihka, Debra Mooney, Bill Lambert, Herbert Jessie, Joel Holt, Walker Davis, Harvey Allen, Bob Hicks, Bob Ludlow and Tribal Councilman for District 1, Thomas Williston. Each Veteran received a gift from Councilman Williston in appreciation of their service.



Wright City Veterans with Councilman Joey Tom: David Davis (Army, Vietnam); David Keyes (Navy, Vietnam); Doug Moye (Air Force, served in Alaska and England); R.C. Green (Army, Germany); Sylvester Isaac Jacob (Army, three years of service, 16 months overseas during the Berlin Crisis); Luther Battiest Jr. (Army, Second Ranger Battalion).

## CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

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

CHIEFS, CLANS & KIN

CHANGING EXHIBIT GALLERY OPENS JULY 23

## HOLIDAY FOOD VOUCHERS

APPLY AT [CHAHTAACHVFFA.CHOCTAWNATION.COM](http://CHAHTAACHVFFA.CHOCTAWNATION.COM)

THANKSGIVING & CHRISTMAS

DEADLINE: **OCT. 23**

CHRISTMAS DEADLINE: **NOV. 26**

Available for low-income Choctaw families living within the Choctaw Nation Reservation  
**One voucher per household.**

Choctaw Nation Outreach Services



## DOI highlight current administration's commitment to strengthening Indian Country and environmental protections

Leaders showcase ongoing efforts at the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

**GENEVA (August 11, 2022)** – Senior leadership from the Department of the Interior are representing the Biden-Harris administration this week in Geneva, Switzerland at the 107th session of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Principal Deputy Solicitor Ann Marie Bledsoe Downes and Senior Advisor to the Secretary Heidi Todacheene joined the U.S. delegation to discuss the U.S. implementation of measures to combat racial discrimination and human rights obligations as required under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Convention).

Both representatives delivered formal remarks to the Committee, in which they acknowledged the various efforts the Interior Department and the Biden-Harris administration are undertaking to seek justice and

equity for communities enduring racial discrimination in the United States and its territories, disadvantaged communities marginalized by extractive industries, and historically overlooked Indigenous communities. Remarks included a focus on the federal trust responsibility; missing and murdered Indigenous people; investigating the U.S. government's role in the federal Indian boarding school system; and environmental and natural resource protections for marginalized communities including incorporating Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge in decision-making so that all governments can benefit from the lessons of the original stewards of our lands and waters.

Bledsoe Downes and Todacheene will join the U.S. delegation's presentation from the Committee on a broad range of issues, including racial profiling, racial disparities with respect to criminal justice, education, housing, health care, and the environment; voting rights; treatment of Indigenous people, Black Americans, and members of other marginalized racial and

ethnic communities; and immigration policy.

The Convention has been ratified by 182 countries, including by the United States in 1994. The Convention requires each State Party to pursue a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms, including by reviewing and amending laws and policies that have the effect of creating or perpetuating racial discrimination. States Parties are required to prohibit racial discrimination in the enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, in areas such as equal treatment before courts, voting rights, employment, housing, medical care and education.

Throughout the convening, the U.S. delegation presented its 2021 report on the implementation of U.S. obligations under the Convention. The report documents the extensive federal and state laws, policies and programs established to ensure equal protection and prevent discrimination, including for health care, housing, education and gender-based violence in Native communities.

## Spooky writing workshop at Choctaw Cultural Center

By Chris Jennings

The Choctaw Cultural Center will offer a chance to learn tips and tricks on writing spooky stories from an award-winning Choctaw author this fall.

Tim Tingle will be at the Choctaw Cultural center on October 29, 2022, conducting a workshop on how to write spooky short stories. The workshop will run from 11:45 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and will be geared towards 8th-12th graders.

Tingle says it's important to get kids involved with storytelling and writing early.

"So much of who we are and what we're going to be for the rest of our lives is determined in these grade levels. If you're going to be a reader and a writer, then you need to start early," he said.

Tingle says the workshop will encourage kids to participate actively. "We'll start with people thinking of ideas of things that have happened to them, of frightening things, and then let their imagination play. Then we'll show how that beginning can work itself into a story," said Tingle.

Tingle received his master's degree in English Literature at the University of Oklahoma in 2003, focusing on American Indian studies.

While teaching writing courses and completing his thesis, "Choctaw Oral Literature," Tingle wrote his first book, "Walking the Choctaw Road." It was selected as Book of the Year in both Oklahoma and Alaska.

Tingle has traveled the world, completing eight U.S. Department of Defense speaking tours. During this time, he performed stories for children of military personnel stationed in Germany. He also spoke at the Library of Congress and presented his first performance at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

As a visiting author and performer, Tingle reaches audiences numbering over 200,000 annually. His first children's book, "Crossing Bok Chitto," garnered over twenty state and national awards and was an Editor's Choice in the New York Times Book Review.

Attendance is limited to 20 kids. For more information on this and other upcoming events, visit <https://choctaw-culturalcenter.com/>.

## CNO administers its first black bear hunting season this fall

**DURANT, Okla.** – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma is home to a thriving and expanding population of Black bears.

Black bears have been present in the woods of the Choctaw Nation for years. Large expanses of intensively managed forests have become a haven for these mighty creatures. Abundant food and protection have allowed this population to grow, resulting in the need for proper management.

Unregulated hunting before Oklahoma statehood caused a severe decline in the bear population.

In the late 1900s, black bears were reintroduced from Minnesota and Manitoba, Canada, into the Ouachita and Ozark mountains of Arkansas. The initial stocking of 250 bears quickly turned into thousands, and these bears made their way into Oklahoma.

Conservation efforts in the state and protection from hunting made their recovery possible. Research initiatives that looked at bear movement and habitat use helped.

By the late 1990s, bear populations had rebounded to the point that nuisance calls increased yearly. State

officials decided in 2009 that a limited season was needed to help manage the population. The initial season was a success, with the quota being surpassed on the first day of the season.

The number harvested and the lack of collared research bears in the harvest made biologists believe the population was larger than what they had estimated.

Today the bear population continues to thrive and push the boundaries of their occurrence. Bears are moving westward, reoccupying much of their original habitat. The bear season has evolved over the years to increase bag limits, open counties to harvest and lengthen seasons.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) will administer its first black bear hunting season this fall.

Open counties will be Choctaw, Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, McCurtain, Pushmataha and the portions of Atoka, Bryan and Pittsburg counties east of US Highway 69.

Archery season dates are October 1-16, with no harvest quota. Muzzleloader season dates are October 22-30 but will end once the harvest quota of 20 is met. The season

limit per person is one bear of either sex. Once the quota is met, the season will close. During muzzleloader season, hunters must call the CNO Environmental Protection Service (EPS) at 1-800-522-6170 before going into the field to confirm that the quota has not been met.

Tribal members who plan to hunt black bears this year must watch a short conservation video, free of charge, and get a permit code from the office of Wildlife Conservation through the Chahta Achvffa portal. Permits are available until October 21.

Hunters who harvest a bear must call the CNO EPS at 1-800-522-6170 so a conservationist can collect information and data from the harvested bear. CNO conservationists will use this information to make informed management decisions about the black bear population.

For more information on CNO bear hunting, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/news/wildlife-conservation/black-bear-hunting/>.

Tribal members can also learn more about CNO Wildlife Conservation by visiting <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/wildlife-conservation/>.



## Broken Bow clinic celebrates 15 years with a new name

**Broken Bow, Okla.** – Recently, the Choctaw Nation Clinic in Broken Bow, Oklahoma, celebrated its 15th year anniversary with a ceremony and a new name. The clinic will now be known as the Choctaw Nation Ruby Choate Clinic.

In attendance were Choctaw Nation Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., Tribal Council Members Tony Ward and Thomas Williston, family members of Ruby Choate, several Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority leadership staff, and the award-winning District 2 Choctaw Nation Singers.

In the last 15 years, the clinic has seen over 67,000 patients. It houses several departments in addition to the urgent care clinic, including a WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) office and Choctaw Nation’s Healthy Aging personnel.

Ruby Choate spent 22 years as a nurse at the Broken Bow Clinic. During the ceremony, several speakers shared stories of the care and comfort she gave. The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council honored her dedicated service by naming the clinic for her. “I look back to the time of the Trail of Tears. If you think about it, Ruby had a lot of those same qualities as our people from a long time ago,” said Thomas Williston, Tribal Council Member and Speaker. “The qualities of caring for others and serving her country are just some of those qualities.”

“We are all excited about renaming the Broken Bow Clinic,” said Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr. “It’s an honor to recognize a dedicated nurse in this way.”



Photo by Choctaw Nation

Tribal Council Member Tony Ward and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. unveil a rendering of the clinic with the new name along with Ruby Choate’s close family members and the Choctaw Nation Princesses.

## Choctaw Cultural Center celebrates first anniversary

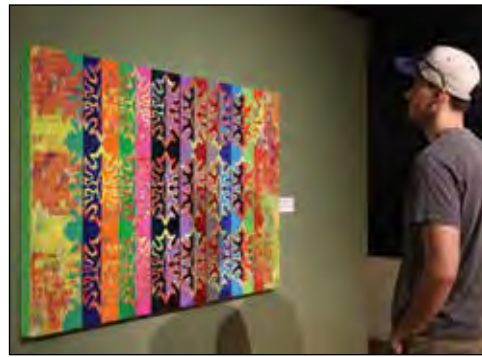
The Choctaw Cultural Center celebrated its first anniversary on July 23, 2022.

Visitors enjoyed a full lineup of activities, including an artist market, special presentations, cupcakes, traditional Choctaw food and much more.

For more information on the Choctaw Cultural Center and a complete list of upcoming events, visit <https://choctawculturalcenter.com/>.



Photo by Choctaw Nation



Photos by Kendra Germany-Wall



# FALL FESTIVAL

CELEBRATING FAITH, FAMILY AND CULTURE

**SEPTEMBER 28, 2022 | MCALESTER EXPO CENTER**  
4500 WEST, US-270 | MCALESTER, OK

9:30 a.m.	Sign-in / Breakfast snack
10:00 a.m.	Information booths open Flu vaccinations/COVID Shots
10:30 a.m.	Gospel Performance; Johnson Family
11:00 a.m.	Welcome; Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. Lord’s Prayer; Choctaw Princesses Address to Audience; Chief Gary Batton
Noon	Speaker; Teresa Billy, Choctaw Language Department Prayer; Jennifer Woods, District 6 Council Lunch provided
1:00 p.m.	Gospel and Choctaw performers Door prizes / Closing remarks

Choctaw Nation will run scheduled buses for this event from the multiple Choctaw Nation Community Centers. Check with your local Choctaw Nation community center for details.

**800-522-6170 | OCLAY@CHOCTAWNATION.COM**

Choctaw Nation Community Health Representative Program

# CHOCTAW

## POWOW

2022

NOVEMBER 4 - 6

SCAN QR CODE FOR DETAILS

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Choctaw elders stay active by participating in chair volleyball tournament.



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Preparing for death can take some stress away from family members.



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Make a list and check it twice before setting out on your next adventure.

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