



June 2025 Issue

Advocates and tribes continue to bring awareness to Missing and Murdered Indigenous People

By Kendra Germany-Wall

The crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) remains a significant issue in America. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) reports approximately 1,500 American Indian and Alaska Native individuals are missing, with around 2,700 murder and non-negligent homicide cases documented. Altogether, about 4,200 cases are estimated to be unsolved.

National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs) shows that Oklahoma has the second-highest number of MMIP cases, with 85 members of various tribes currently missing, including Choctaw tribal members Brandon Hummel from Atoka, Derek Reece from Mounds and Gerald Bruner of Oklahoma City.

There are also many unsolved murders, like Choctaw tribal member Emily Morgan, who was murdered outside of a vacant home on East Highway 271 in Bache near McAlester. Thanks to the diligence of her mother, Kim Merryman, Morgan's case has gotten the attention of the BIA and the Vidocq Society, an elite group of investigators who assist law enforcement with unsolved crimes. Her case has been featured in numerous publications and articles, including NBC's Dateline's digital series Dateline: Missing in America and Cold Case Spotlight.

For many MMIP cases, family are their biggest advocates. Across Indigenous cultures, family is a core value, and women are at the center of it all.

Before colonization, Choctaw women accompanied men on diplomatic missions, a practice that, according to a 2011 Iti Fabaavssa article, European commentators believed was a mark of "savagery." From the Choctaw perspective, it was a sign of the importance women held in their society and the confidence that was placed in these women.

Today, women like LaRenda Morgan (Cheyenne Arapaho), who worked with State Rep. Mickey Dollens, D-Oklahoma City, and State Sen. Paul Rosino, R-Oklahoma City, on the legislation that led to Ida's Law, are standing up not only for their family mem-

bers but also for all Indigenous people.

Ida's Law is named after Morgan's cousin, Ida Beard, who went missing in 2015.

Though Ida's mother reported her missing almost immediately, the El Reno Police Department took two weeks to open a missing person case. This error cost valuable time in gathering evidence.

Six years after her disappearance, thanks to the diligence of her family and other MMIP activists, Ida's Law was signed by Governor Stitt in 2021.

Ida's Law called for the creation of the Office of Liaison for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons within the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation (OSBI).

This office works across jurisdictions, including tribal, to investigate unsolved cases involving Indigenous people and create a case tracking system.

This year, House Bill 1137, related to Ida's Law, passed both chambers of the Oklahoma legislature with strong bipartisan support. However, on May 5, Governor Kevin Stitt surprisingly vetoed the bill.

In an interview with The Oklahoman, OSBI spokesperson Hunter McKee mentioned that the agency currently has only two special agents working as liaisons for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP). While the agency aims to expand the MMIP program, securing federal funding has been challenging. House Bill 1137 would have removed the requirement for the OSBI to seek federal funding for the Office of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons without prohibiting the voluntary use of existing federal mechanisms.

The agency did not expect any budgetary impact from this change.

Stitt's veto surprised many advocates and legislators, particularly since he had previously signed Ida's Law and the Kasey Alert System into law.

In the announcement claiming that "Justice must be blind to race," Stitt stated, "While I support efforts to solve missing persons and homicide cases, I cannot endorse legislation that singles out victims based solely on their race."

He went on to say, "Creating a separate office that prioritizes cases based on race undermines the principle of equal protection under the law and risks sending the message that some lives are more worthy of government attention than others."

This statement directly contradicts the governor's previous statements.

When he initially signed Ida's Law, Stitt stated, "Far too often, when a Native person goes missing or is found murdered, their families have to navigate a complex checkerboard of jurisdiction. That confusion makes it so difficult on victims' families during what's already a traumatic time."

Stitt's announcement was released on Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Awareness Day.

On that day, MMIP advocates and organizations, including MMIW-Chahta, gathered at the capitol to raise awareness of the issue.

Regardless of the actions of Governor Stitt, those gathered at the event were able to bring awareness to the issue.

"It was a beautiful day to be Indigenous at the capitol," said Karissa Newkirk, founder and president of MMIW-Chahta. "Anytime we stand in solidarity, my heart has a little more hope."

In an op-ed published by the Oklahoman on May 19, Newkirk stated, "Gov. Stitt's veto is the latest example of persistent institutional failures that cause untold harm and tragic consequences...As our nation reflects during National Missing and Murdered Indigenous People Month, we must confront the deep-rooted neglect and societal indifference that has perpetuated for centuries. We must keep fighting for those we love and have lost."

According to Newkirk, MMIW-Chahta has had another year of growth and success, helping the Indigenous Community in Southeastern Oklahoma access vital services and programs.

The organization works to raise awareness of MMIP, directly assists victims in active MMIP and domestic violence situations, and educates the community on MMIP, domestic violence, mental health and healing.

They provide food for the unhoused and furnish homes for those escaping domestic violence through community donations. Additionally, MMIW-Chahta helps victims access tribal services, employment, and life skills training.

"We want them to have access to everything they need to set them up for success," said Newkirk.

The organization has opened a new office at 723 West Texas Street in Durant, Oklahoma, which includes a clothing closet and public classes and events.

They have launched the Today Support Group, founded by Aaron Newkirk, to help those facing mental illness and advocate for suicide prevention.

MMIW-Chahta also collaborates with law enforcement agencies on missing and murdered Indigenous persons (MMIP) issues.

On May 14, the group held its second annual law enforcement appreciation banquet in Durant. Local agencies were invited to connect and discuss MMIP matters. Building strong relationships with law enforcement is essential for raising awareness and solving cases, according to Newkirk.

To get involved, donate or utilize MMIW-Chahta services, visit their Facebook page, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women-Chahta, their website www.mmiwchahta.org, call 888-401-0972, or email mmiwchahta@gmail.com.

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma also showed support for MMIP awareness through its annual MMIW Walk and 5k in Antlers, Oklahoma on May 10.

The official number of participants was 292, with Nolan Watson of Broken Bow and Tiffany Burchfield of Rattan, taking home the overall first-place medals in the men's and women's divisions.

According to the BIA, more than 1.5 million Indigenous people have experienced violence in their lifetime.

CNO offers several programs for victims of crime and abuse.

For a full list of services offered, visit www.biskinik.com or www.choctawnation.com/services/.




MURDERED

Emily Morgan
Biological Sex: Female
Tribe: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Location of Murder: Bache, OK
Date of Murder: August 26, 2016
Age: 23

Emily Morgan, 23, and her friend Totinika Elix were shot and killed in Morgan's car outside a vacant house on East Highway 271 in Bache, Oklahoma. The Bureau of Indian Affairs' Missing and Murdered Unit and the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation are seeking information to aid in the investigation, led by Agent Vincent Marcellino.

Tips: Text 847411, call 1-833-560-2065, or email ojs_mmu@bia.gov.




MISSING

Brandon Dean Hummel
Biological Sex: Male
Tribe: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Last Contact: January 24, 2024
Missing From: Atoka, Oklahoma
Missing Age: 28 Current Age: 29
NamUS Number: #MP117995

Brandon is 5'11" and weighs about 150 lbs. He has brown hair, brown eyes, and several distinctive tattoos: multiple tattoos on his right arm, a star on his left neck, a skeleton on his left hand, barbed wire on his right shoulder, a heart near his left eye, and a Pac-Man design on his left sideburn. Brandon had recently met new people online. He left home, on foot, without his phone or tablet.

Tips: Choctaw Lighthorse Police, (580)-380-9371.




MISSING

Derek Alan Reece
Biological Sex: Male
Tribe: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Last Contact: October 1, 2022
Missing From: Mounds, Oklahoma
Missing Age: 39 Current Age: 42
NamUS Number: #MP118398

Derek is 5'10", weighs about 135 lbs, and has brown hair and hazel eyes. Reece was last seen at the Bethesda Boys Home in Mounds, Oklahoma, where he lived and worked. He didn't show up to work and left all his belongings behind. The Muscogee Creek Nation Lighthorse Police and MCN Emergency Management searched the Boys Home property, including the dormitory.

Tips: MCN Lighthorse Police, (918) 723-7800.



MISSING

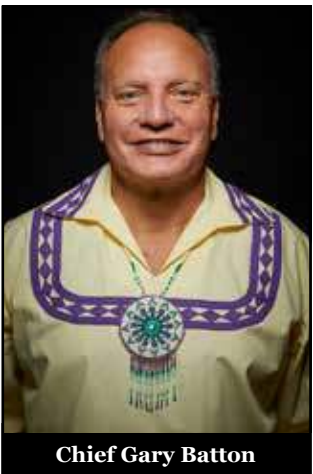
Gerald Luwayne Bruner
Biological Sex: Male
Tribe: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Last Contact: August 10, 2022
Missing From: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
Missing Age: 42 Current Age: 45
NamUS Number: #MP103623

Gerald, also known as Gerald Roberts or Junior Bruner, is about 5'6" to 5'8" tall and weighs 150 to 170 pounds. He has black hair, brown eyes, and scars on his left arm and hand. His tattoos include a skull on his left hip, the word "Tre" across his chest, a deer head on his abdomen, a snake, the number "405," a sun on his left arm, and the name "Ellen" along with an angel on his right arm. He was last heading to Houston, Texas

Tips: OKC Police Department, (405) 297-1129.

Faith, Family, Culture

Na Yimmi, Chukka Achvffa, Im Aivlhpesa



Chief Gary Batton

Choctaw Nation takes time to pray on National Day of Prayer

The Choctaw Nation, along with many others in the United States, took time on Thursday, May 1, to observe the National Day of Prayer.

The day of prayer, observed annually on the first Thursday of May, drew a crowd of Choctaw Nation associates who gathered across the reservation to observe this day. I had the opportunity to lead our gathering at the Choctaw Nation headquarters building along with our Choctaw faithful who prayed together and sang Choctaw hymns. I am so pleased to see the outpouring of faith, family and culture on this day – it is one of my favorite events each year.

For a brief look at the Choctaw National Day of Prayer Service, watch the video above.

The National Day of Prayer dates to the founding of the United States as the Continental Congress first officially observed the day in 1775, and it was formally established as a formal and federally recognized day by President Truman in 1952. The day is open to all faiths.

“President Reagan amended the law in 1988, designating the first Thursday of May each year as the National Day of Prayer,” according to the National Day of Prayer Task Force.

The 2025 theme for the National Day of Prayer is hope – more specifically, “Pour out to the God of hope and be filled,” which is a reference to a Bible verse found in Romans, which reads in full: “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit,” (Romans 15:13).

As we celebrate this day and participate in the National Day of Prayer across the Choctaw Nation, my hope is that this day and what it means and represents will bring everyone peace and comfort that comes with giving thanks to the Lord. The Choctaw Nation has benefitted greatly by being a God-fearing nation and we give thanks on this day of prayer for the many gifts bestowed upon us. It’s no accident that our vision of “Living out the Chahta Spirit of faith, family, and culture” begins with faith, and for that I know that many of you join me in saying, “Amen.”

CNO honored by Leadership Oklahoma for community work

OKLAHOMA CITY – Leadership Oklahoma (LOK) honored the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for its community work at the annual Excellence in Leadership Gala on April 26. Tammye Gwin, CNO Senior Executive Officer of Strategic Development, accepted the award on behalf of the tribe, joined by other CNO employees and LOK alumni.

Williams Graduates from LOK

LOK’s mission is to inspire and support member leaders dedicated to positive change. Shauna Williams, CNO Executive Director of Communications, recently graduated from Leadership Oklahoma’s Class 37, completing a nine-month program with 49 classmates from diverse backgrounds. The program focused on state issues, improving leadership skills, and building relationships, with participants traveling to learn about Oklahoma’s industries and cultures while engaging with state leaders and community advocates.



Photos by Kendra Germany-Wall
Above: Tammye Gwin accepts LOK award.
Below: CNO representatives pose for a photo at annual LOK Excellence in Leadership Gala.



Submitted Photo
Shauna Williams (center) graduates from Leadership Oklahoma’s Class 37.

New same-day clinic opens in Antlers to serve community

ANTLERS, Okla. (April 29, 2025)– The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CN-HSA) has announced a partnership with Oklahoma State University (OSU) Medicine to open the Antlers Community Health Clinic. The first of its kind in Oklahoma, the clinic will have a small staff onsite with providers overseeing patients virtually utilizing the latest in innovative technology.

Located at 506 N Hwy 271, Suite C, Antlers, Okla., the Antlers Community Health Clinic officially opens on April 30, 2025. The facility is open to everyone, including non-tribal community members, and is designed to meet the health care needs of residents requiring same-day care but don’t require the needs of an emergency room.

“We’re proud to bring this much-needed service to the Antlers area,” said Dr. Jason Hill, Chief Medical Officer of Choctaw Nation Health. “Our goal is to provide fast, compassionate care close to home, and to ease the burden on local emergency rooms.”

“This facility represents more than a building,” said Dr. Johnny Stephens, President, OSU Center for Health Sciences. “It represents access, equity and innovation. We are already planning a second one. It represents a health care gap we can address through advanced technology, innovative tools and deeply rooted partnerships. We’re expanding access to quality healthcare, it doesn’t matter what zip code you live in.”

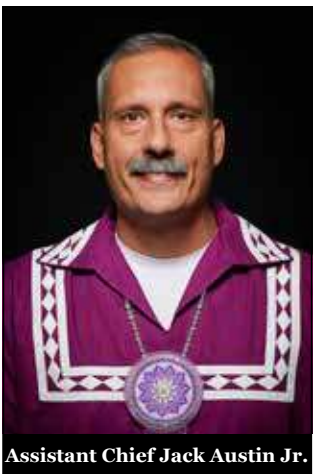
The clinic will operate Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., offering walk-in services for conditions such as minor injuries, infections, flu symptoms, cuts, sprains, and more. Patients must be at least 2 years old to be seen.

Antlers Community Health Clinic accepts all major insurance plans. The clinic also integrates with Epic’s MyChart system, making it easy for patients to manage appointments, view test results, and communicate with the patient care team online.

Dr. Vu Ngo will be the overseeing physician for the clinic. A board-certified physician in both Family Medicine and Osteopathic Manipulative Treatment, Dr. Ngo will be hands-on by mentoring the staff and collaborating on patient care. Dr. Ngo is currently practicing at the Choctaw Nation Dermatology Clinic in Taliuhina, Okla.



Photo by Christian Toews
Tribal Council Member Joey Tom cuts the ribbon for the Antlers Community Health Clinic.



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

STEAM camps open a world of solutions for young Choctaws

The STEAM Camps at Jones Academy help students interested in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Math (STEAM). Students are given real-world problems to solve and challenge the students to come up with a solution using tools available to them.

The course helps Choctaw students ask questions, find new solutions, solve problems, think outside the box and become innovators. STEAM camps take place across the United States, and some of the real-world solutions that have been found in these camps have helped to push our understanding of the world.

STEAM offers Choctaw children a way forward by lighting a path for a future career. STEAM jobs grew by 16% in the U.S. between 2014 and 2024 compared to only 11% for other sectors, according to U.S. Labor figures. In that same Labor report, science and engineering careers earn more than double the income of the median job in the United States.

Starting Choctaw children on a STEAM learning path when they are young gives them a leg up in the education and jobs market. The STEAM program encourages young kids to speak up with their ideas and ask questions. Being in a collaborative environment also helps young children with teamwork skills to drive innovation and spread knowledge among their teammates.

Children can also learn by observing how their peers tackle issues and come up with solutions that not only provide the potential for a better approach but also enable children to learn that some solutions can be reached in multiple ways. Learning Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math skills at an early age helps our Choctaw students in their school learning journey and enhances interpersonal skills gained by working as a team.

The Choctaw Nation offers STEAM Camps at Jones Academy throughout the month of June. The application deadline was April 1. If your child was unable to attend this year’s camp, there will be another chance in 2026. Visit www.choctawnation.com/events/youth-camps/ for more information.

These camps are just another way that the Choctaw Nation is investing in our tribal children to ensure a bright future for our tribe.

The natural man

When is a person considered a sinner? Is it when a person does wrong against society? Is it when they disobey the laws of the land? The scriptures tell us that all men are born in sin and shapen in iniquity.

In Psalms 51:5, David cried, “Behold I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.” He said this after Nathan, the Prophet, called out his sin of adultery with Bathsheba. In the Garden of Eden, Adam deliberately and knowingly broke God’s commandment.

In Genesis 2:17, we read, “But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” The word “die” means a physical and or spiritual separation. When Adam sinned, the entire human race was sold into sin. “Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death

passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,” Romans 5:12. Regardless of birth, environment or opportunity, man’s heart is wicked because he is born a sinner, separated from God.

In Jeremiah 17:9, the Prophet Jeremiah said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jesus said this about man. And he said, “That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man,” Mark 7:20-23. Man in his natural state cannot reconcile with God because of his sinful nature. “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one,” Romans 3:11,12. Man may attempt to correct the evil of his heart but cannot. There is only one way man’s sick heart can be changed, and that is through the miracle of God’s grace, but God’s grace can be imputed to man only because of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh,” Ezekiel 36:26. If Corinthians 5:19 declares, “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”

Man must be reconciled with God before he can have a relationship with him. If man does not have this reconciliation through the finished work of Our Lord on the Cross, his religious works are in vain.

Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:7, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.”

Arkansas SB 510 Strengthens Law Enforcement Collaboration

DURANT, Okla. – A newly passed law in Arkansas is expected to enhance public safety for all residents and visitors. Senate Bill 510, which was signed into law by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders today expands law enforcement agencies’ ability to collaborate across jurisdictions.

Specifically, SB 510, allows cross-deputization agreements between municipal, county, state and tribal law enforcement agencies within Arkansas. Agreements like these, which are common in neighboring states like Oklahoma, authorize officers to partner to enforce laws. They improve cooperation, response times and overall public safety.

“SB 510 represents a huge step forward for collaboration to enhance public safety in Arkansas and the Choctaw Nation,” said Chief Gary Batton of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO). “Other states have demonstrated the long-term value of collaboration and cooperation between tribal nations and law enforcement at all levels. We look forward to developing public safety partnerships in Arkansas to benefit all residents and visitors.”

The author of the bill, Arkansas State Representative, District 50. Zack Gramlich, was pleased to see the bill become law.

“As a lifelong resident of the City of Fort Smith, and a Choctaw Nation tribal member, I am proud to have authored this legislation that serves my city and allows for collaboration with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Public Safety is always an utmost responsibility and priority, and I am proud to be one part of helping to create a pathway for these partnerships”, said Gramlich.

Fort Smith Mayor George B. McGill added, “This cross deputization legislation marks a critical step forward in ensuring the safety and well-being of all our communities. By strengthening collaboration between tribal and non-tribal law enforcement, we’re removing barriers to timely, effective public safety responses. Fort Smith is proud to stand with the Choctaw Nation and support this important partnership.”

The Choctaw Nation maintains more than 75 partnerships across Oklahoma, improving law enforcement, especially in rural areas, while also recognizing tribal sovereignty.

For the Choctaw Nation, public safety is a longstanding priority. The Tribe has doubled its Lighthorse Police force in recent years to protect members and the Tribe’s neighbors.



Photo by Christian Toews
Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Chief Gary Batton hold newly signed law.

CNO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The program is here to help tribal members before, during, and after emergencies. From severe weather to natural disasters, we're committed to keeping our communities safe and supported.

TRIBAL MEMBERS - KNOW WHO TO CALL:

Emergency Management: Need updates or help during storms, floods, or other disasters? CALL 844.709.6301

Emergency Services: Facing a crisis? We can provide utilities, rental, and mortgage assistance. CALL 580.920.7015

Scan the QR Code for more information

Choctaw Nation Emergency Management

DON'T FORGET TO CASH YOUR CAR TAG REIMBURSEMENT CHECK!

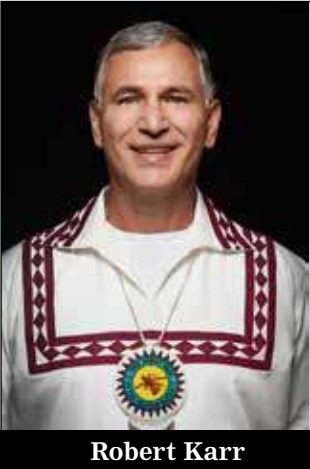
FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT, CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/CHOCTAW-VEHICLE-TAGS/TSLP@CHOCTAWNATION.COM | 580.634.0720

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

STAR PROGRAM APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [HTTPS://WWW.CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/STAR](https://www.choctawnation.com/services/star)

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Robert Karr

District 11

Halito chim Achukma,

Welcome to summer. I hope you and your family enjoy spending time together watching ball games, at the lake and on vacation for the next few months. We’re blessed to live in the Choctaw Nation with all the beautiful landscapes we have here when the grass is green, and the trees have all their leaves. The last three months we’ve held many meetings and events in District 11 and the CNO, I’ll share some highlights of what has happened recently and look at our summer schedule.

First, congratulations to all our Choctaw members who completed their education from high school to higher education. I wish you the best with your future plans. March 4 was Read Across America Day, I had the pleasure of spending time with our CNO HeadStart kids and the 1st- 4th grade students

at Jones Academy. What a wonderful time I had reading with the students; it’s so nice to see how well our children are learning and growing within Choctaw Nation education programs, Yakoke, to all the staff. In April, I attended the McAlester High School JOM Senior Banquet; the MHS Indian Education Program employees do a great job of serving our Native American students. Star Program applications are now open for students enrolled in grades 2-12 on the Chahta Achvffa member portal.

May 14 was the Elder Appreciation Day at Durant. There was a good group of District 11 seniors attending, we placed second in the name tag competition. Yakoke to all the ones who helped in making the name tags. At the Trail of Tears Memorial Walk May 17, we seen our people come together to remember our ancestors long walk from Mississippi to Oklahoma. May 23 was the Memorial Day Ceremony at Tvshka Homma, where we remembered the ultimate sacrifices of our military servicemen and women.

Upcoming events in District 11 include the Princess pageant June 3, McAlester Wellness Center 10-year Anniversary Celebration June 4 and the community center senior veteran’s meal June 5 at 11:30 and Boom in the Valley at Tvshka Homma is July 3. I hope you have a great summer, and I look forward to seeing everyone at the Labor Day Festival in September.

We don’t have council elections this year in District 11, but members who are registered will receive a ballot to vote for Proposed Constitutional Amendments. Mail-in ballots will be distributed to current registered voters by June 21. Tribal members who have not registered or have changed addresses since the last election will need to complete a new Voter Registration form. You can go to the Choctaw Nation Voter Registration website and fill out a form or pick one up at the community center. Election day is July 12.

I count it as an honor and privilege to serve the okla chahta (Choctaw people) of District 11; if I can help you in any way regarding the Choctaw Nation, please let me know.

Yakoke, Chihowa vt Achukma (God is Good)



Anthony Dillard

District 10

Halito!

As a tribal leader and a public servant, I have always believed that the path to true sovereignty begins with the ability to educate our people and provide meaningful economic opportunities. In this legislative term, my agenda is focused on building a stronger foundation for the future, one that ensures our children have access to quality education and our communities have the tools they need to prosper economically, both on the reservation and throughout Oklahoma.

Strengthening Education for Future Generations

Education is more than a classroom experience, it is a pathway to empowerment, identity, and self-determination. Some of my legislative priorities include:

- Increasing Tribal and State Investment into professional development for our rural schools that will directly affect academic outcomes in the classroom
- Expanding Tribal education programs to include Native history and curriculum that reflects our shared heritage
- Expanding New Scholarship and Workforce Training Opportunities
- I am advocating for increased scholarship funding for Choctaw students and new workforce development programs in trades, healthcare, agriculture, and technology. These efforts will ensure our young people are prepared for the evolving job market leadership roles within their communities.

Laying the Groundwork for Economic Independence

- Continue to support Chahtapreneurs, I will continue to support legislation that creates more access to capital, technical assistance, and incubator spaces for those areas that do not have that benefit yet. Local business are the backbone of our economy, and they could greatly benefit from our investment.
- Infrastructure investment continues to be a high priority in our rural communities on the reservation, hopefully we will be able to secure state and federal funding that we can partner with to enable completion of many projects. Roads, clean energy, water systems, and broadband to name a few, these projects create jobs and lay the groundwork for long-term economic resilience.

My legislative agenda is rooted in the belief that when our children have access to quality education and our communities have economic opportunities, we all thrive. This is not just a tribal issue or a rural issue it’s a Oklahoma issue. Together, we must invest in policies that lift up every community.

As your representative, I remain dedicated to this work and invite continued collaboration from tribal leaders, educators, business owners, and policy makers. Let us build a future defined not by limitations, but by potential.

Yakoke!

Anthony Dillard, Tribal Councilman District 10

WILDLIFE & OUTDOORS

By Matt Gamble

Turkey season has wrapped up in the Choctaw Nation. Choctaw tribal members harvested 97 turkeys, 86 of which were harvested within the Choctaw Nation, and 11 were harvested within the boundaries of the Five Tribes Wildlife Reciprocity Agreement. This historic agreement has provided many opportunities for tribal members to fish and hunt within the Five Tribes (Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Muscogee, and Seminole) reservation boundaries. Choctaw members only need to carry proof of tribal membership while hunting or fishing within any of the five reservation areas. All harvests are reported through the Chahta Achvffa membership portal. For more information visit <https://simplebooklet.com/cndwc20242025huntingfishingregulations#page=1>.

For those out and about in nature, this is the time of year that you may run across young wildlife. Our department receives many calls relating to whitetail deer fawns, fledgling birds, and many other species. Many people are well intentioned when trying to intervene on what they see as “orphaned wildlife.” Most often these young critters are not orphans at all. They are simply hiding out until their mom comes back around. During the first part of a whitetail fawn’s life, the doe will leave the fawn hidden and only come back to feed the young deer. This reduces the amount of scent left and keeps the fawn safe while the doe is out feeding and going about her day. If you encounter young wildlife the best thing to do is back up and leave them alone.

Fledgling birds are also best left alone. While leaving the nest they will often find their way to the ground as they learn to fly. This is a very natural process and does not need human intervention.

June is a great time to do some farm pond management. Many ponds benefit from some selective harvest. If you have a farm pond that is full of 10-12” bass that you catch on every cast, you will probably want to filet a few of those fish. I like to release them with some corn meal into hot peanut oil until crispy. You can also turn them loose onto a flat top grill and gently put them into a tortilla. Paired with some sweet tea, French fries, and hush puppies it is an unbeatable summertime treat.

Make some time to enjoy nature with friends and family this summer and enjoy the splendor that God has blessed us with.

Choctaw Nation Wildlife Conservation

COUNCIL MINUTES

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA
TRIBAL COUNCIL

REGULAR SESSION AGENDA
May 10, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTES
3. ROLL CALL
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
 - a. Regular Session April 12, 2025
5. WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS
 - a. Veteran of the Month, District #8 – Danny Belvin
 - b. First Choctaw Language Speaker, District #8 – Evelyn James
6. PUBLIC COMMENTS -
 - a. Lin Ogg – Individual Speaker – Keeping up your immune system.
 - b. Alice Shuman – Individual Speaker – ICW and State Violations
7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES
8. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Approve Oklahoma Western Telephone Company’s Application for the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wet Prairie – OWTC Program
 - b. Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Vehicles
 - c. Approve the Disposal of Surplus Capital Assets – Equipment
 - d. Approve Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tribal Participant in Nationwide Title VI Elder Needs Assessment
 - e. Approve Application for the FY 26 Administration for Community Living/Administration on Aging Older Americans Title VI Grants
 - f. Approve Application for the FY 25 Tribal Management Grant (TMG) Round 2
 - g. Authorize the Chief to Place Property in Bryan County in Trust

Status with the United States of America

- h. Approve Funding for the Acquisition of Approximately 20.2 Acres of Unimproved Real Property in Blanco, Oklahoma
- i. Approve Funding for the Acquisition of Approximately 40 Acres of Unimproved Real Property in Pittsburg County, Oklahoma (Daisy Ranch)
- j. Approve Funding for the Acquisition of Approximately 6.01 Acres of Unimproved Real Property in Hugo, Choctaw County, Oklahoma
- k. Approve Funding for the Acquisition of Approximately 6.01 Acres of Unimproved Real Property in Hugo, Choctaw County, Oklahoma
- l. To Approve the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan of 2025

9. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

10. OLD BUSINESS
11. ADJOURNMENT
12. CLOSING PRAYER

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA
TRIBAL COUNCIL

SPECIAL SESSION AGENDA
May 17, 2025

1. CALL TO ORDER
 2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTES
 3. ROLL CALL
 4. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Approve funding for the acquisition of 842+/- acres of improved real property in Grant, Choctaw County, Oklahoma
 5. OTHER NEW BUSINESS
 6. OLD BUSINESS
 7. ADJOURNMENT
 8. CLOSING PRAYER
- All votes passed unanimously

Belvin is Veteran of the Month

Danny Belvin, District #8, is Choctaw Nation’s Veteran of the Month. Belvin was born in 1948 at the Talihiina Hospital and grew up in Boswell, Okla., where he attended school until his graduation in 1967.

He joined the Marine Corps in March 1968 and completed basic training in San Diego, Calif., followed by eight weeks of radio school. He was stationed at Camp LeJeune, N.C., then deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, from Jan. to June 1969.

In September 1969, he was sent to Vietnam with the 3rd Marine Division. He was stationed at Camp Courtney, Okinawa, and later returned to Camp LeJeune.

In Jan. 1971, he was deployed again to Vietnam until June 1971, followed by a six-month Mediterranean Cruise. He was honorably discharged from military service as a Corporal (E-4).

He said his most memorable tour of duty was the Mediterranean Cruise, and he greatly valued his time in the military. He earned the Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Ribbon, the Vietnam Cross for Gallantry, and a Unit Citation during his service.

After completing his military service, Belvin returned to Boswell to work in the construction industry. He and his wife, Frances, whom he married one minute after midnight on January 1, 2000, operated a trash collection business until their retirement. He has been an active member of the Choctaw Honor Guard for approximately 15 years.

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.



James is First Language Speaker

Evelyn James of Hugo, Oklahoma was recently recognized as the First Language Speaker of the Month by the Choctaw Tribal Council.

James is the daughter of Anderson and Francis James, who spoke both Choctaw and English.

James and her only living sister sing together with the District 8 Choctaw Singers. James has three children, 20 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

“It is with great pleasure that I am still able to speak Choctaw with my sister, other tribal member and my Councilman, Perry Thompson,” said James.





CHOCTAW POWWOW 2025

SAVE THE DATE

OCT 31 - NOV 2



SCAN QR CODE FOR DETAILS

Upcoming Events

Outreach at the Beach | June 4 | 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. | Sardis Lake | 432646 East 1625 Lane Clayton, OK 74536 | This is a family-friendly event with swimming, beach volleyball, giveaways, and food. Representatives from tribal programs and services will be on hand to give out information and answer questions.

Blood Drive-Durant Community Center | June 6 | 10:15 a.m. - 2 p.m. | Durant Community Center | 2746 Big Lots Pkwy Durant, OK 74701 | Join the Annual Blood Drive Challenge and save a life. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments can be made to get in quickly. Search “Choctaw” or search by city. The blood collected stays within the community!

Blood Drive-Durant Headquarters | June 12 & 13 | 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. | Choctaw Tribal Headquarters | 1802 Chukka Hina Durant, OK 74701 | Join the Annual Blood Drive Challenge and save a life. Walk-ins are welcome, but appointments can be made to get in quickly. Search “Choctaw” or search by city. The blood collected stays within the community!

Cinema at the Center | June 14 | 1 p.m. | Choctaw Cultural Center | 1919 Hina Hanta Wy, Calera, OK 74730 | This monthly series features a wide range of films designed around a fun, family-friendly theme. This month, check out Disney’s “Up.” We’d love to see you there!

Community Cultural Meeting – Westminster | June 19 | 6 p.m. | Doubletree by Hilton Westminster | 8773 Yates Dr Westminster, CO 80031 | Come join Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton for a fun, educational, and cultural event in Westminster that offers insight into the programs available to tribal members. Update your tribal membership card, ask questions about the Choctaw Nation, and share in the fellowship.

Community Cultural Meeting – Lawton | June 21 | 2 p.m. | Hilton Garden Inn Lawton-Fort Sill | 135 NW 2nd St Lawton, OK 73501 | Come join Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton for a fun, educational, and cultural event in Lawton that offers insight into the programs available to tribal members. Update your tribal membership card, ask questions about the Choctaw Nation, and share in the fellowship.

Car Seat Checks and Safety Information Event | June 27 | 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. | Idabel Community Center | 2408 E Lincoln Rd, Idabel, OK 74745 | It’s important to make sure car seats are properly installed. Come by for a car seat check and visit with tribal programs that may be able to assist with other resources. Representatives will be on hand from Guiding Adolescent Parents, Choctaw Nation Youth Outreach, Chahta Inchwka, Choctaw Nation Housing-Envision Program, TIPCAP, Children Matter, and other programs.

Programs & Services

Princess Pageants - Young Choctaw women, ages 8 - 22 (1/16-degree Choctaw or more), are invited to compete in their respective district pageants. District winners will compete at the Choctaw Labor Day Festival for the overall Choctaw Nation Royalty titles. Upcoming pageants include: District 11 on June 3, District 7 on June 5, District 4 on June 10, District 5 on June 12. For more details on upcoming pageants and more dates, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/princess-and-royalty/>.

Dad Jokes

Brought to you by the Choctaw Nation Environmental Protection Service

HOW CAN YOU TELL THE OCEAN (OKHVTA CHITO) IS FRIENDLY?

It waves!

WHY DID THE SUN (HVSHI) GO TO SCHOOL?

To get brighter!

WHAT DID THE LITTLE TREE (ITI) SAY TO THE BIG TREE (ITI)?

Leaf me alone!

HOW ARE PIRATES ECO-FRIENDLY?

They follow the 3 (tuchina) ARRRs!

WHAT DO YOU CALL A BEAR (NITA) WHO LOST ITS TEETH?

A gummy bear!

WHAT DO YOU GET A HUNTER (OWVTTA) FOR HIS BIRTHDAY?

A birthday pheasant!

WHAT DO YOU CALL A RECYCLING BIN THAT LIKES TO DANCE (HIHLA)?

A can can!



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CHOCTAW TRIBAL MEMBER

SCAN QR CODE FOR MORE INFO



EXPLORE AND DISCOVER

A unique one-day getaway for the whole family!

Scan to Purchase Tickets

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

ChoctawCulturalCenter.com

Biskinik Announcement Guidelines

We accept milestone birthday greetings for ages 1, 5, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80 and above.

Couples may send announcements of silver wedding anniversary at 25 years of marriage, golden anniversary at 50 years, or 60+ anniversaries. We do not post wedding announcements.

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

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

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

Mail to: Biskinik
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702
or email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief

The Official
Monthly Publication of the
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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

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.

Chahta Anumpa Aiikhvna Chun Language Lesson

Kanchvk Asha
Ishke i Nittak Na Yukpa

Sung to: (The Wheels of the Bus Go Round and Round)

Kanchvk asha yvt na yukpa, na yukpa, na yukpa
Kanchvk asha yvt na yukpa, na yukpa hoke.
(Those who live in the barn are happy, happy, happy)

Ofi yvt kanchvk ma woh-li-chi, woh-li-chi, woh-li-chi
Ofi yvt kanchvk ma woh-li-chi, woh-li-chi ho-ke
(The dog is at the barn barking, barking, barking)

Wak vt kanchvk ma a-nusi a-nusi a-nusi
Wak vt kanchvk ma a-nusi a-nusi hoke.
(The cows are sleeping, sleeping, sleeping in the barn)

Issubat kanchvk ma hi-kia, hi-kia, hi-kia
Issubat kanchvk ma hi-kia, hi-kia hoke
(The horses are in the barn, in the barn, in the barn)

Katos vt kanchvk ma owvt-tat ia, owvt-tat ia, owat-tat ia
Katos vt kanchvk ma owvt-tat ia, owvt-tat ia hoke
(The cats are at the barn hunting, hunting, hunting)

Shukhat kanchvk ma ai-impa, ai-impa, ai-impa
Shukhat kanchvk ma ai-impa, ai-impa hoke.
(The pigs are at the barn eating, eating, eating)

Kanchvk asha yvt na yukpa, na yukpa, na yukpa
Kanchvk asha yvt na yukpa, na yukpa hoke.
(Those who live in the barn are happy, happy, happy)

www.choctawschool.com

OBITUARIES


John Ray Carterby

John Ray Carterby, 62, passed away March 23, 2025.

John was born Dec. 2, 1962, in Broken Bow, Okla., to John Amos and Mary Lou Carterby.

He has preceded in death by his parents; wife Lisa Carterby; brother Adam Carterby and grandson Cristian Carterby.

John is survived by life partner of 30 years Fay Bernadin; son and daughter-in-law Cris and Elisha Carterby; sisters Melinda Simpson, Bertha Going, and Martha Carterby; grandchildren Summer Carterby, Chelsea Carterby and Cris Carterby Jr.; several nieces and nephews; and a host of other relatives and friends.



Georgeina Fay Brown

Georgeina Fay Brown, 98, passed away Jan. 2, 2025, in Ardmore, Okla.

Georgeina was born April 26, 1926, in Hennepin, Okla., to George Albert Jacks Jr. and Agnes (Frenchman) Jacks.

She was preceded in death by her parents; husband Carl Brown; son Bedford Carl Brown; and brother Bob Jacks.

Georgeina is survived by her son Ronald Wayne Brown; grandchildren Taryn, Brent, Justin, Nicholas “Nikki”, Tiffany, Christy, and Jeremy; five great-granddaughter; daughter-in-law Cricket Brown; and a host of nieces, nephews, family, and friends.




Darlene Renee Dedmon

Darlene Renee Dedmon, 52, passed away April 11, 2025.

Darlene was born May 30, 1972, in Talihina, Okla., to Ricky Wilson and Kathy (Harvey) Wilson.

She was preceded in death by her father; and grandparents Minnie and John Harvey, Joe and Alta Mae Wilson, and Anna Mae Bryson.

Darlene is survived by her children CoDee Dedmon and Se-lene, Jared Dedmon and Alaska, and Kylee Dedmon; grandchildren Amara Dedmon and Lola D. Dedmon; her mother; stepparents Donnie and Patricia Taylor; brothers Justin Taylor and spouse Lekeisha, and Jamie Taylor; sister Natia Hauff and spouse Nickalas, nephews and nieces Landon Taylor and spouse Madison, Eric Taylor; Grace Taylor; Kaiser Hauff, Declan Hauff, and Ayden Hauff; father of her children Eddee Dedmon, and her dog of 15 years Gypsy Belle.




William Jodie Waugh III

William Jodie Waugh III, 67, passed away April 14, 2025.

Jodie was born Dec. 5, 1957, in Hugo, Okla., to William Jodie Waugh Jr., and Pauline (Jones) Waugh Wright.

He was preceded in death by his parents; chosen parents Lanning and Charlene Ishmael; son Eric Waugh; and sister Donna Dominick.

Jodie is survived by his wife Pam Waugh; sons Dustin Palmer and spouse Sherry; William Jodie “Joey” Waugh IV and spouse Christina; Darrell Palmer and spouse Sadie; daughters Dawnya Brockman and spouse Randall, and Wendy Waugh; chosen daughters Rachel Scroggins and family, and Nelli Conte; grandchildren Bret Parent, Chase Parent, Clay Parent, Twine Palmer, Rober Breshears, William Breshears, Lorna Breshears, Riffin Waugh, Calvin Palmer; Eldon Palmer; Memree Hatcher-Brockman, Shyla Hatcher-Brockman, Preston Black, Braxton Chumley, Brooklynn Simmons and Bradley Simmons; great-grandson Henry Parent; sisters Sue Haggerty, Jo Lehmann and spouse Austin, Barbara Lenoir and spouse Mike, Sherry Sessa, Robbie Armijo and spouse Micky; numerous nieces and nephews; and host of family, friends and loved ones.



Full obituaries can be seen at www.biskinik.com

NOTES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

27th Annual Father’s Day Gospel Singing
Sunday, June 15 at Blackjack Church located one mile west of Sobol, Oklahoma. Supper starts at 5 p.m. Singing starts at 6 p.m. The singing will be emceed by Lena Priddy and sound engineered by Lilbit Rachel Dixon. Bring your own lawn chair. Concessions will be available. 436735 State Highway 3, Fort Towson, OK 74735.

APPLICATION NOW OPEN HIGHER EDUCATION

The Higher Education Program application for Summer is now open.
Apply now through June 15.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CIRCUS CITY 5K SEPT. 6, 2025

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT CAREY LESTER
CLLESTER@CNHSA.COM
CIRCUSCITY5K2025.EVENTBRITE.COM

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



2025 TRIBAL ELECTION GUIDE

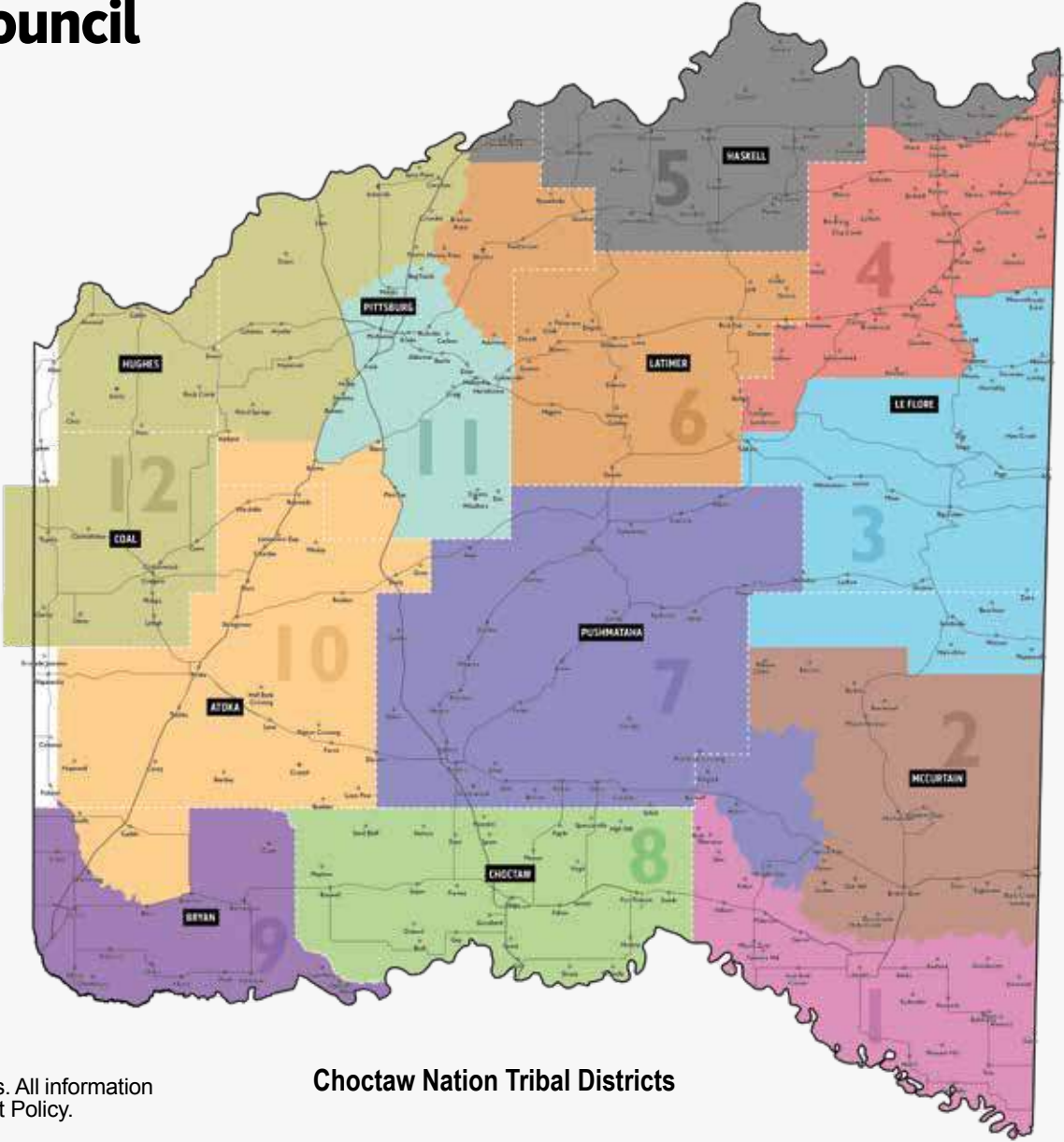
Early Voting: Friday, July 11 • 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
General Election & Special Election: Saturday, July 12 • 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Same-Day Registration Available
For More Information, Visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/elections>

Candidates file for offices of Council Districts 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10 and 12

Elections are held at alternating two-year periods for the four-year terms of Chief and Tribal Council. This year, filing opened April 21, 2025 for candidates for the offices of Tribal Council in Districts 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 and the Special Election in Council District 5. All candidates for the elective offices of Council District 6, 9 and 10 were qualified, unopposed, and will not appear on the ballot. Elections will be held for Council Districts 4, 5, 7 and 12. The list of qualified candidates for elective office are:

| General Election | Special Election |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Council District 4 | Council District 5 |
| Jess Henry (incumbent) | Tami Gonzalez Cantrell |
| Kenneth G. Marshall | Marlena Crase |
| Council District 7 | Sharona Farmer |
| Joey D. Tom (incumbent) | Kimberly Ford |
| Adrian Johnico | Earl Smith |
| Council District 12 | Vincent "Vinnie" Terrell |
| Regina Mabray | Jennifer Turner |
| Vickie McClure | |

Additional candidate and voting information is listed on the following three pages. All information submitted may have been edited per guidelines of the Election Candidate Insert Policy.



Choctaw Nation Tribal Districts

General Information for Choctaw Voters

Below information is from the Chief and Tribal Council Election Ordinance . For full document, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/election>.

Voter Registration

Section 1 Any person who has obtained tribal membership as defined by Article II of the Constitution and who has or will have attained the age of eighteen (18) years by the date of any election shall be eligible to register to vote, except as provided in subsection (d) of Section 8 of this Article. Every eligible tribal member shall be required to be registered with the Voter Registration Department to vote in tribal elections.

Section 2 Each eligible tribal member shall complete a Voter Registration Form which shall include a provision for a voter to permit or prohibit the release of his or her address to candidates as provided in Sections 1 and 2 of Article IX of this Ordinance. The information provided on the voter registration form shall be signed under oath. The Voter Registration Form shall be issued by the Voter Registration Department and may be amended from time to time at the discretion of the Department.

Section 3 Tribal members residing inside the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma shall be registered in the district in which they reside.

Section 4 A tribal member not residing within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, as defined by Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution, may become affiliated with a district of his or her choice or may opt to be unaffiliated with any district. Once a non-resident voter has affiliated with a district while residing outside the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, he or she shall be required to remain affiliated with the chosen district, unless the voter establishes residency in another district within the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; provided, in the event that the boundaries of a district are redrawn or are otherwise changed, any non-resident voter affiliated with the district shall be notified and shall be allowed to change his or her district affiliation in accordance with procedures set forth by the Election Board.

Section 5 A non-resident voter unaffiliated with a district shall only be eligible to vote in an election for the office of Chief and on any proposed ballot measures.

Section 6 The Director of Voter Registration shall be authorized to develop an electronic system of voter registration and may contract with a provider to implement such system. Eligible tribal members may register to vote with the Voter Registration Department at any time during regular business hours except holidays recognized by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. An eligible tribal member who has not previously registered to vote may do so during a general

election, or if authorized by the Secretary, during a run-off or special election, at the times and locations provided in Sections 1 through 3 of Article XI of this Ordinance, by completing a voter registration form at the voting location.

Section 7 A voter may make any registration changes allowed by this Ordinance by submitting a new voter registration form to the Voter Registration Department, during regular business hours except holidays recognized by the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, or during an election as provided in Section 6 of this Article.

Section 8 A voter's registration may be cancelled for any of the following reasons: (a) A tribal member appears before the Voter Registration Department and executes a written notice stating that he or she no longer desires to be a registered voter of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; (b) A member sends a notarized request to the Voter Registration Department stating that he or she no longer desires to be a registered voter of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; (c) The Election Board or the Voter Registration Department receives notification, that may be independently verified, of the death of a voter; or (d) The Tribal Membership Department is notified by another tribe that a member has registered with such tribe. No enrolled tribal member of another tribe or person who votes as a citizen or member of another tribe shall be eligible to vote in elections of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. The Tribal Membership Department shall notify the Voter Registration Department in such event.

Election Dates

Section 1 General elections shall be held every two (2) years. Elections for Chief and six (6) Tribal Council members shall be held during one election and the election for the other six (6) Tribal Council members shall be held two years later. An election for an office shall not be held in the event that any candidate for such elected office fails to draw an opponent or otherwise runs unopposed.

Section 2 General elections shall be held on the second Saturday in July in odd-numbered years, with early voting on the Friday preceding Election Day. Run-off elections shall be held on a Saturday in accordance with Article XXI of this Ordinance. If a candidate does not receive more than fifty percent (50%) of the total votes cast for the respective office, then a run-off election between the two (2) candidates receiving the most votes in the general election shall be conducted on the fourth (4th) Saturday following the general election.

Section 3 Special elections shall be held on a Saturday and shall be conducted pursuant to Article XXI of this Ordinance and Article XIV and Article XVI of the Constitution.

Mail-in Ballots



All registered voters will start receiving ballots in the mail beginning the week of June 14.

All ballots completed by voters must be mailed and processed by the United States Post Office in Durant, OK on July 11.

For more information about Choctaw Nation elections, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/elections> or contact the Election Board Secretary by email at ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com or by phone at 580-634-0679.

Open Voting Locations

Early Voting:
Friday, July 11 • 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
General Election & Special Election:
Saturday, July 12 • 7 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Same-Day Registration Available

Council District 1

Choctaw Community Center
2408 E Lincoln Rd,
Idabel, OK 74745

Council District 2

Choctaw Community Center
3839 Battiest Pickens Rd,
Broken Bow, OK 74728

Choctaw Community Center
1346 E Martin Luther King Dr,
Broken Bow, OK 74728

Council District 3

Choctaw Community Center
39618 N Hwy 259,
Smithville, OK 74957

Choctaw Community Center
100 Railroad St,
Talihina, OK 74571

Council District 4

Choctaw Community Center
208 B St, Poteau, OK 74953

Council District 5

Choctaw Community Center
19400 AES Rd,
Spiro, OK 74959

Choctaw Community Center
2208 E Main St,
Stigler, OK 74462

Council District 6

Choctaw Community Center
1056 NW 1003 Ave,
Wilburton, OK 74578

Council District 7

Choctaw Community Center
302 SW O St,
Antlers, OK 74523

Choctaw Community Center
5718 Rodeo Grounds Rd,
Wright City, OK 74766

Council District 8

Choctaw Community Center
1304 W Victor St,
Hugo, OK 74743

Council District 9

Choctaw Community Center
2746 Big Lots Pkwy,
Durant, OK 74701

Council District 10

Choctaw Community Center
1625 W Liberty Rd,
Atoka, OK 74525

Council District 11

Choctaw Community Center
3274 Afullota Hina,
McAlester, OK 74501

Council District 12

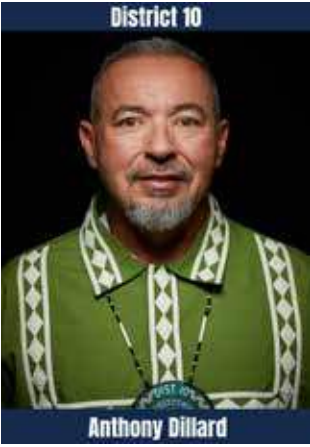
Choctaw Community Center
103 E California,
Coalgate, OK 74538

Choctaw Community Center
707 Bond St,
Crowder, OK 74430

Affiliated voters may choose to vote by mail or go to vote in person at any open voting location listed as such. For more information, <https://www.choctawnation.com/elections> or contact the Election Board Secretary by email at ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com or by phone at 580-634-0679.

Uncontested Candidates

All candidates for the elective offices of Council District 6, 9 and 10 were qualified, unopposed, and will not appear on the ballot.



2025 Election Candidates

District 4

Jess Henry Incumbent

Councilman Jess Henry is a proud member of the Choctaw Nation with deep roots in southeastern Oklahoma. Born and raised on a cattle farm in Tamaha, Jess comes from a strong Choctaw lineage. His mother was a full-blooded Choctaw, and his grandparents were listed on the Dawes Rolls as full-blood enrollees.

Jess has dedicated his life to honoring his Choctaw heritage through service and leadership. He spent 32 years on the Highway Patrol, rising through the ranks of Trooper, Lieutenant, Captain, and Trooper Commander, becoming the highest-ranking Choctaw in the agency's history.

In 2021, Jess was elected to represent District 4. During his first term, he made good on his promises to increase housing, expand services, and improve access to tribal programs. Under his leadership, District 4 has seen the addition of new LEAP homes and affordable elder housing. He also played a key role in expanding senior nutrition programs, children's summer nutrition, and increasing access to essential services.

One of Jess' proudest achievements has been seeing the long overdue Dale Cox Community Center in Poteau now under construction. Thanks to his efforts, the center broke ground and is set to open next January, providing a vital hub for events, services, and connections.

Jess believes in getting results, not just making promises. Over the past four years, he's fought to make Tribal Government work better for the people of District 4. But he knows the work isn't finished. That's why Jess will continue to push for more housing, strong healthcare access, and expanded services right here in District 4.

A man of faith, family, and culture, Jess has been married to his wife Joy for 44 years. Together, they've raised two children and proud grandparents to four. They have lived in Pocola, Oklahoma for 40 years.

Councilman Jess Henry is asking for your vote for re-election so he can continue working for you and all the families of District 4. Yakoke!



District 4
Kenneth Marshall

I, Kenneth Marshall, announce my Candidacy for District 4 Tribal Council.

I have been employed with Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for 13 plus years in Maintenance.

I believe that tribal voters should know what my platform is and why I believe it is right for our people at this time.

- (A) I will serve the Choctaw people with dedication.
- (B) Practice ethical standards, honesty and transparency in our district.
- (C) Protect Choctaw Sovereignty.
- (D) Restore positive relationships with other Tribal, Local, State and Federal governments.
- (E) Demand safe atmosphere and protection.

My values and principles are "To be respected and to be a man of good character, be honest and truthful.

If elected I shall not betray that trust you will have given me. You can help me by helping you to lead our district.

I ask you for that opportunity. YAKOKE



District 5
Tami Gonzalez Cantrell

My name is Tami (Gonzalez) Cantrell and I am proud to announce my candidacy for Choctaw Nation Tribal Council District 5. I am a proud Choctaw woman that comes from a long line of full blood Choctaws. My family has lived on their original allotment in Haskell County their entire life. I am a lifelong resident of Haskell County and a proud wife, mother and educator. I am proudly married to Brandon Cantrell and together with our 4 children we work as stewards of the land on our cattle ranch outside of Stigler. As a certified teacher I am extremely dedicated to instilling a love of education and the pursuit of higher education and training opportunities for all our Chahta youth. Throughout my life I have worked on both the local and national tribal levels. I have worked directly for the Choctaw Nation with positions serving youth and our vulnerable adults and elders. On the National level I worked with Self-Governance Communication and Education working with The Department of Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services advocating for our sovereign rights. The continued fight for our tribal sovereign rights is one that I will continue throughout my life as we as proud people deserve the rights to govern ourselves. The decision to embark on this journey within the tribal government comes from a love and dedication to my fellow Chahtas. I have a servant's heart and am dedicated to the betterment of life for our elders and the advancement of our tribal youth. I know that we must honor our past while focusing on the native belief of looking ahead to the next 3 generations. Without past knowledge and understanding our tribe cannot progress.

My campaign will be dedicated to giving a voice to our citizens in District 5 and our Tribal members across the nation by:

- Visiting all areas within our district and gaining knowledge of the needs of our people
- Advocating for more tribal youth involvement in cultural programs that encourage the knowledge and love for the Chahta heritage
- Increasing agriculturally based programs that help improve mother earth by teaching our youth to be good stewards of the land and its products
- Increasing more activities that encompass youth involvement with our elders so that they may learn the ways of the Chahta life and our past
- Increased access to education and employment opportunities for all our tribal members
- Giving a voice to all Chahta people within and outside of our tribal nation

My life is dedicated to the Choctaw motto of Faith, Family and Culture. Without faith and family nothing in my life would prevail. I am blessed with a family that supports me beyond measure and a church family that is as close as blood. My cultural dedication can be summed up with one phrase- Chahta Sia Hoke, it is who I am, and I am proud of the sacrifices and the dedication that comes with being Choctaw.

Yakoke,
Tami (Gonzalez) Cantrell



District 5
Marlena Crase

Dear Choctaw Nation Community,
I am Marlena Crase, a proud member of the Choctaw Nation, raised in the rural community of Rocky Point. My journey began at McCurtain High School, followed by studies at Carl Albert State College and Poteau Beauty College, where I earned my cosmetology license. With a strong foundation in leadership, I served as a department manager at Walmart before founding my own beauty salon. For the past 14 years, my husband Chad and I have successfully owned and operated two pawn shops—one in Stigler and another in Spiro for four years. Together, we have been married for 31 years and are blessed with three children and four grandchildren.

Community service has always been at the heart of my life. For 11 years, I was an active member and past president of MRS, a local organization dedicated to providing scholarships and donations to strengthen our community. My commitment to service is rooted in the values of faith, family, and culture—core beliefs that define our Choctaw tribe. These values guide my vision to support and sustain our people, from our youth to our elders.

Having grown up in a single-parent household, I understand the financial challenges many face. The Choctaw Nation Summer Youth Program was a lifeline for me, providing not only income but also invaluable lessons in work ethic that have shaped my career and life. As District 5 Councilor, I will champion our Choctaw youth by advocating for programs that equip them with the tools and opportunities needed to thrive as future leaders of our tribe.

Looking ahead, I recognize that healthcare is a pressing concern for many. Balancing full-time work with the care of aging parents or relatives can be daunting. To address this, I propose exploring assisted living options to ensure our elders receive the dignified care they deserve while supporting working families.

I am committed to serving our tribe with integrity, compassion, and a forward-thinking approach. Together, we can build a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant Choctaw Nation for all generations.

Sincerely,
Marlena Crase



District 5
Sharona Farmer

My name is Sharona J. Farmer, and I am a lifelong resident of District 5. I am uniquely suited to taking on the role of councilperson because I have deep roots in both LeFlore and Haskell counties. I grew up in Spiro, but my family ties run strong in Haskell County, where my father's side still owns our original allotment land. I am the daughter of Joe and Pam Perry and the granddaughter of Campbell Phillip "C.P." Perry and Mary Opal King Perry. My grandfather was an original Dawes enrollee, and my father grew up speaking Choctaw as his first language. That cultural foundation shaped my values and continues to guide me today.

I have dedicated my life to education and community service. For 13 years, I served as a classroom teacher, working directly with students to foster curiosity, learning, and growth. I hold a master's degree in school counseling and am pursuing my doctorate in education.

I've had the privilege of working alongside passionate colleagues in the Career Development Department to develop award-winning programs like Choctaw HEROES, which received the Redefining Rural Healthcare Award. I currently assist Choctaw students interested in healthcare careers, and HEROES has met or exceeded every objective for the entire life of the program. I've served on numerous Boards, including the Executive Board for Pervasive Parenting and the Spiro Schools Indian Education Board. I've also been recognized as a Sequoyah Fellow by the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES).

I've been married to my husband for 29 years. We have a son, CJ, a daughter, Delaney, and one grandson, McCree, who calls me Nonna and is the light of my life.

- If elected to represent District 5, I will focus on:
- Education – Supporting Choctaw students and promoting culturally rooted learning.
 - Career Opportunity – Strengthening pathways to employment and entrepreneurship.
 - Healthcare – Expanding wellness and quality care access, especially in rural areas.
 - Housing – Advocating for affordable housing that meets the needs of our families and elders.
 - Cultural Preservation – Honoring our language and traditions and passing them on to future generations.

I am running for Tribal Council because I believe our future is strongest when we lead with our hearts and are guided by our values. My Dad always taught me that if there is work to be done, you just put your head down and get to it. That's what I'm ready to do for District 5. I'm committed to service, guided by our culture, and prepared to work for the people of District 5.

If you want to reach me, my number is 918-649-5183, or you can email me at electsharona-farmer@gmail.com.

Yakoke. Let's do this together!
Instagram: @electsharonafarmer | Tiktok: @elect.sharona.farmer
Facebook: Elect Sharona Farmer – District 5 Tribal Council



District 5
Kimberly Ford

Halito,
My name is Kimberly Sue Ford, I am 11/16 Choctaw, and I am a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. I am running for the position of District 5 Choctaw Tribal Council. I am a Licensed Practical Nurse, a former restaurant owner and me and my husband, James owned and operated a cattle business in Kinta, Oklahoma until his passing.

Born and raised in Talihina, Oklahoma, I am the daughter of Daisy Perry and the granddaughter of Katherine Ward. I graduated from Talihina High School in 1985, where I played softball and basketball throughout my school years. After graduation, I attended the LPN program at Kiamichi Area Vocational School. I have been a licensed practical nurse for 39 years, with twenty of those years dedicated to the Choctaw Nation Health Service Authority. In addition to my nursing career, I owned and operated the Kinta Kafe for 8 years, cherishing the connections I made with the people of District 5 who supported my establishment.

Currently, I am a widow with a wonderful son, a beautiful daughter-in-law, and a granddaughter, Bella Rose. I aspire to demonstrate to my granddaughter the importance of working for and supporting our Choctaw community and making District 5 a desirable place to live. My family has always taught me the value of serving our Choctaw people while enjoying the process. My uncles, Sherman, Wayne, and J.D. Ward, have been involved in Labor Day Softball for years, and my cousin, Daryan Eubanks, is the current District 9 Junior Miss for 2024-2025.

Having lived in this district for 30 years, I am eager to contribute to our tribe beyond my medical expertise and offer my skills generously. I am committed to listening to our people, understanding their concerns, and taking action to provide the necessary support. My current experience caring for my mother has deepened my understanding of the support required for families who care for their loved ones. A robust support system, extending beyond hospitals and hospice care, would be invaluable for those balancing work and caregiving responsibilities. Our community center can serve as a vital resource and gathering place to address family challenges and celebrate community successes.

If elected, it would be my profound honor to serve our nation with the respect and dignity that only the Choctaw people can offer.

Thank you for your time and review. I look forward to hearing from you soon.
Yakoke,
Kimberly S. Ford
1-539-237-0014 | Ksford.ksf@icould.com



District 5
Vincent Terrell

Candidate Name: Vincent "Vinnie" Terrell
Position Running for: Tribal Council Member District 5
Phone Number: (580) 559-6637
Email: vbt3rr3ll@gmail.com
*No biography or photo available.

District 5

Earl Smith

My name is Earl Smith, and I am proud to officially announce my candidacy for District 5 Councilman for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. As a dedicated community member, I bring years of experience in working for Choctaw Nation. I have deep roots in the District 5 community and a strong commitment to tribal values. I believe in preserving the Choctaw heritage for future generations. With integrity, transparency, and a heart for the people, I am ready to serve and strengthen our community. My hope is to bridge the gap between leaders and community members ensuring everyone has a say in shaping our future and uphold the Choctaw values of Faith, Family, and Culture.

If elected as your District 5 Councilman, I plan to bring positive change to our community due to my deep understanding of local issues. I believe in working together with the people of District 5 to ensure every voice is heard. My commitment to transparency and open communication will help build trust within our community, making it a better place to live and thrive for generations to come. I would appreciate your vote!



District 7

Adrian Johnico

Unfortunately, we received news on May 22, 2025, that Adrian Johnico passed away. The Choctaw Nation is saddened by the news of his passing and would like to extend condolences to the Johnico family.

As a result of this news, Johnico will not appear on the 2025 Election Ballot.

Adrian Johnico is a proud Choctaw and resident of Clayton for 35 years. Adrian is the youngest of four children. He’s been married to Jessie Pugh Johnico for 25 years. Jessie teaches Kindergarten at Buffalo Valley School District. He has three children: a 24-year-old son, Carson; a 20-year-old daughter, Maggie; and a 16-year-old son Aidan.

Adrian Johnico is a dedicated servant-leader with a deep commitment to the people he serves. With a natural ability to understand and meet the needs of others. Adrian approaches leadership with a mindset of service first. As a candidate for Choctaw Nation Tribal Council District-7, his top priority is to ensure that the community’s highest needs are met with compassion and care. Adrian embodies the principles of servant leadership through his unwavering work ethic, resilience, integrity, and devotion. His passion for his community and his dedication to uplifting others will bring a fresh, dynamic energy to the Choctaw people of District-7. Adrian is determined to be a leader who walks beside the people, working tirelessly to make a difference every day. He believes in the power of consistent action, never wavering in his commitment to his values and his vision for the future. “I’m here to fight for what I believe in. This is worth fighting for,” he says. “You can’t count me out. I will rise, because this isn’t a sometimes thing – it’s a mindset every day. It’s a great day to get up, show up, lead up, lift up, and never give up.” Adrian Johnico is ready to be the servant-leader that District-7 deserves, and he is committed to making a lasting impact for the Choctaw people.



District 7

Joey Tom Incumbent

Halito,
As District 7 Tribal Councilman of the Choctaw Nation, my journey over the past four years has been both transformational and deeply fulfilling. When I first took office, I was filled with a sense of responsibility to my people and a commitment to serve with integrity and dedication. This role has allowed me to connect with our community on a profound level, listening to the voices of our members and understanding their needs and aspirations for our communities. Throughout my tenure, I have been fortunate to work alongside dedicated individuals who share a passion for our Nation’s growth and prosperity. Together, we have tackled various challenges, from economic development initiatives to cultural preservation efforts. I am immensely grateful for the support of my fellow Tribal council members, Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Austin and our community, which has been instrumental in the progress we have made. Each success has reinforced my belief in the strength and resilience of the Choctaw Nation. Through this we have homes built for our families in the District 7 area marking 100 homes through ARH, LEAP and Independent elderly homes, new wellness center; Choctaw language and Hymn singing classes, community park revitalization and providing lunch at our facility on the Tuskahoma grounds. I am the 41 year old son of Jimmy Tom and the late Betty Tom of Broken Bow. My siblings are Jared Tom and Gennavie Tom whom both are employed by the Choctaw Nation Cultural Department and the late Margo Tom. I am currently a member at Tohwali United Methodist Church and a member of the Wright City School Board where I have served for the past 11 years. I have been married for 21 years to my wife Hope Tom an we have 3 children Konnor 21, Raynie 18, and Ace’Lee 6 years old.

I am eager to continue this journey, advocating for our people and ensuring that our voices are heard in every decision made. I am look foward to the possibility of continuing to make a positive impact in the lives of our community members. With your support, I hope to build on our achievements and strive for an even brighter future for the Choctaw Nation. You may contact me at
Email joeytom0419@yahoo.com | Phone 580-236-0797 | Facebook Joey Tom Choctaw Tribal Council District 7
Yakoke, Joey Tom



District 12

Vickie McClure

Halito,
Su hohchifo yut Vickie McClure, ulhti awak tuklo ya ohoyo nan apesa baleli la chi.
Hello, my name is Vickie McClure, I am running for councilwoman of district 12. I am a proud Choctaw tribal member who has lived in the Tupelo, Oklahoma for the last 30 plus years. I have three (3) daughters, seven (7) grandchildren, one (1) great granddaughter and two (2) sons-in-law.
My parents are the late Rev. Lee Burris and Mildred Bohanon Burris. My home church is Round Lake Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Centrahoma, Oklahoma, where I currently serve as the sesion clerk. March 31, 2025, I retired with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma after serving 21 years as an associate as a community based social worker of Outreach Services. I also served as a trustee for the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority Board for 10 years as well as serving on the princess pageant committee.
If elected to serve District 12 and the Choctaw people, I would like to uphold the tribes value of faith, family, and culture. I feel, we as Choctaw people need to continue to work together to move forward and prosper but to never forget who we are and where we came from. We are truly blessed with the many services our tribe has to offer not only our tribal members but the community as well.

If given the opportunity, I would love to be the voice for District 12 and want to work hand in hand with the people. Ideas and concerns are welcome. Please feel free to reach out to me via email; mcclure_vickie@yahoo.com or cell phone; 580-320-2839 if you have any questions regarding my campaign.
Yakoke



2025 Election Candidates

District 5

Jennifer Turner

Halito
My Name is Jennifer Turner, And I am honored to official-ly announce my candidacy for the Choctaw Nation Tribal Council, District 5 seat.
I am a proud Choctaw with deep and lasting roots in Haskell County. My grandfather, Houston Perry, was an original enrollee, and my grandmother was Ola Perry. The Perry family first appeared on the Haskell County census in 1850s. I am a member of Bethel Indian Baptist Church, Founded in 1894 by my great-grandfather, Daniel Perry. My faith is strong, and one of my heartfelt hopes is to see out Native churches grow and flourish again.
My husband, Mark Turner, and I have been married for over 32 years. We are blessed with two sons, Brady, a Licensed Practical Nurse at Choctaw Nation Stigler Clinic and a Student at SWOSU; and Carson, who will be graduating from Carl Albert State college this May. My parents are Linda Perry York, A registered Choctaw artist, and Kenneth and Esther Sutton of San Antonio Texas

My life has been spent caring for others. I hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing and have worked as a Registered Nurse for 30 years. I am currently the RN Unit Manager of the residency clinic at Choctaw Nation Healthcare Center, where I previously served as House Supervisor. Healthcare is not only my profession, but also my calling- and I will continue to advocate for every tribal member to receive the compassionate, high-quality care they deserve.
Beyond healthcare, I have had the privilege of serving on the Stigler Public School of Education for the past 13 years. Education is the key to opportunity, and I am committed to ensuring that ever Choctaw youth have access to the tools, resources, and support they need to graduate, pursue high education or vocational training, and build a strong future. Lifting up our youth and removing barriers to success will be one of my top priorities.
As your District 5 Council woman, I will bring experience, dedication, and a deep love for our people in this role. I will focus on issues that matter most to us-caring for our elders, strengthening healthcare, supporting education, and preserving our precious Ancestry and culture. I believe in transparency, hard work, and listening to the voices of our community.
I humbly ask for your support and vote on July 12. Together, we can honor our ancestors, serve our people, and build a bright future for the generations to come.
Yakoke,
Jennifer Turner



District 12

Regina Mabray

Regina (Folsom) Mabray is a resident of District 12 with deep ancestral ties to the Choctaw Nation. Born at the Tahina Indian Hospital to J.D. and Rita Folsom, she was raised with the language, values, and traditions of her people. Regina is 19/32 Choctaw, and her grandparents, Jackson and Lizzie James, were full-blood enrollees listed on the Dawes Rolls. Her roots run deep in the communities of Quinton and Kiowa where she lived for several years in a home without indoor plumbing and was raised in part by her Choctaw-speaking grandmother.
From those humble beginnings, Regina developed a lifelong commitment to service, education, and culture. She graduated from Kiowa High School in 1983 and earned her bachelor’s degree from East Central University in Ada, followed by two advanced degrees. Supported by the Choctaw Nation throughout her education, Regina dedicated over 34 years to public service as a teacher, school librarian, Director of Indian Education, and Johnson O’Malley Coordinator. She has worked tirelessly to preserve and pass down Choctaw values and heritage to future generations, securing critical funding and resources for schools and students.
As a wife, mother, and grandmother, family is at the heart of everything Regina does. She and her husband, Robert, were high school sweethearts and have been married for 38 years. They live in Ashland and are active members of their community church, where Regina serves as Sunday School superintendent, church secretary, and a long-time board member.

Regina understands the day-to-day challenges facing Choctaw citizens in District 12. She has seen firsthand the burden of having to travel outside the district to access basic tribal services. Regina is running to be a voice for the people and to bring essential services closer to home. Her top priorities include bringing more jobs to the district, expanding access to healthcare, improving the education opportunities for our children, and increasing the number of LEAP homes and elder housing units in District 12.
Grounded in her faith, driven by her love for the Choctaw people, and inspired by the stories and needs of her neighbors, Regina is ready to serve. If elected, she will be a strong advocate for progress and will work closely with the Tribal Council to ensure District 12 receives the attention, resources, and recognition it deserves.
For more information, please contact Regina at 918-424-0362.
Yakoke!



Additional Information

For more information regarding the 2025 Choctaw Election, voter registration information and voting statistics, visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/vote>. Tribal Voter Registration information is also available on Chahta Achvffa. If you need assistance, please call 580-642-8600.



TRIBAL VOTER REGISTRATION
INFORMATION NOW ON CHAHTA ACHVFFA

Visit, chahtaachvffa.choctawnation.com
For assistance, call **580-642-8600**



Scan the QR Code to access Chahta Achvffa

 Choctaw Nation Voter Registration

★ ★ Election Candidate bios are printed exactly as submitted to the Election Board. No edits have been made, other than formatting. ★ ★
If a bio or photo is missing, it wasn’t submitted by the due date.



Amendment 1

Proposed Change

Amendment 1 Related Questions

A: Those boundaries are based on a map that is not available. The proposed description of the boundaries is clearer and more readable.

A: It will not impact the current boundaries of the Choctaw Nation as the new description is based on existing federal statutes and treaties.

Amendment 2

Proposed Change

Amendment 2 Related Questions

A: Removing this language strengthens the Nation's sovereignty by enabling the Choctaw Nation to be ruled by its own laws. This proposal also amends the Article XVII Oath of Office by removing "the State of Oklahoma, and the United States of America" from the Oath of Office to be uniform and further strengthen the Nation's ability to make, amend, and be governed by its own laws.

Amendment 3

Proposed Change

Amendment 3 Related Questions

A: The current description of the twelve (12) Districts and land they embrace is no longer accurate due to reapportionment by Tribal Council, which is within Tribal Council's power. Removing the individual land descriptions for each District and providing the Tribal Council's general authority to determine the area each District embraces by making these amendments makes the Choctaw Constitution more accurate and clearer.



If you are interested in helping at this year's voting locations, please fill out the application on the left and submit it to the Election Board via mail or email.

Voting Location Board Members will need to be able to attend training in Durant, Oklahoma on either July 2 or July 3.

For more information, contact the Election Board by email at ElectionBoard@choctawnation.com or by phone at 580-634-0679.

Amendment 4

Proposed Change

Amendment 4 Related Questions

A: This amendment exercises sovereignty and protects and promotes Choctaw Culture by correctly referring to the Capitol of the Choctaw Nation by its Choctaw translation from “Red Warrior.”

Amendment 5


Proposed Change

Article XVIII, Section 2. Adoption by not less than fifty-one percent (51%) of the total number of qualified voters of the Nation voting in the last Chief's election shall be required to amend this Constitution.

Amendment 5 Related Questions

A: This amendment exercises sovereignty and protects and promotes Choctaw Culture by correctly referring to the Capitol of the Choctaw Nation by its Choctaw translation from “Red Warrior.”

Voting Location Board Recruitment Form 2025



Name: _____

First
Middle
Last(Maiden)
Married

VR # _____

CN# _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Preferred Contact Method:

☐ Phone
☐ Email

☐ Text Message
☐ Mail

| Mailing Address | City | State | Zip |
|-----------------|------|-------|-----|
|-----------------|------|-------|-----|

1) Are you interested in serving on the Voting Location Board for this year's tribal election? Y/N

Qualification Questions

2) Are you currently an enrolled tribal member with the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma? Y/N
Article XII. Voting Location Board, Section 1.

3) Are you related within a 3rd degree of consanguinity to any candidate(s)? Y/N
Article XII. Voting Location Board, Section 2.
...related within the third degree of consanguinity/affinity (including adoption) to a candidate or prospective candidate for office, defined as a spouse, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, sibling, step-sibling, sibling-in-law, grandparent, grandparent-in-law, step-grandparent, child, legal guardian, stepchild, grandchild, nephew, first-cousin, in a dating relationship...

4) Do you reside within the same household as an Election Board Member? Y/N
Article XII. Voting Location Board, Section 1.

5) Are you currently employed by a Candidate or Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma? Y/N
Article XII. Voting Location Board, Section 1.

6) Are you available for the following dates/times?

| | | | |
|------------|--------------|--------------------------|-------|
| July 2nd | 9am - 4:30pm | Training (Durant, OK) | Y / N |
| July 3rd | 9am - 4:30pm | Training (Durant, OK) | Y / N |
| July 11th | 8am - 4:30pm | Early Voting | Y / N |
| July 12th | 7am - 7pm | General/Special Election | Y / N |
| August 8th | 8am - 4pm | Run-off Early Voting | Y / N |
| August 9th | 7am - 7pm | Run-off | Y / N |

Training dates will be assigned by the Election Board; letters will be mailed to selected workers.

7) Are you willing to work at another Voting Location if one is not available in your area? Y/N

☐ Idabel, OK
☐ Broken Bow, OK
☐ Battiast, OK
☐ Smithville, OK
☐ Talihina, OK
☐ Poteau, OK

☐ Stigler, OK
☐ Spiro, OK
☐ Willburton, OK
☐ Antlers, OK
☐ Wright City, OK
☐ Antlers, OK

☐ Wright City, OK
☐ Hugo, OK
☐ Durant, OK
☐ Atoka, OK
☐ McAlester, OK
☐ Coalgate, OK

8) Do you have reliable transportation to travel to the Training Site (Durant, OK) and Voting Locations? Y/N
Election Board will consider preferences, but will make final decision of assigned locations and positions

Date Form Completed: _____

Selected? Y/N

Declined to Work? Y/N

If selected, position/location assigned: _____



Nickell selected as 2025 Gates Scholar

Cayser Nickell has been selected as a Gates Scholar and is part of the Gates Scholarship Class of 2025. He is one of 750 Scholars chosen from over 48,000 applicants and represents a small percentage of American Indian/Alaskan Native recipients.

The Gates Scholarship, launched in 2017 by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, covers the full cost of attendance for a bachelor’s degree, including tuition, fees, and living expenses, along with support services for academic and career success.

Cayser’s scholarship journey began in July of last year, culminating in a virtual interview in March as a finalist.

He actively participates in extracurricular activities, including the National and Oklahoma Honor Society, and maintains a 4.0 GPA.

He plans to attend East Central University, then transfer to Oklahoma State University for a Bachelor in Kinesiology and eventually pursue a Physical Therapy doctoral program.

He has a strong passion to continue his education in the medical field. Cayser lost his father, Jesse, in February of 2024 after battling brain cancer for 12 years. Jesse was a proud member of the Choctaw Nation. Instilling his love for the outdoors and a healthy lifestyle in Cayser from a very early age.

“I enjoy being healthy and working out because my health is important to me,” said Cayser: “I feel like I can use what knowledge I have to help others improve their health and well-being”.

In his free time, he enjoys outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, and camping. For more information on The Gates Scholarship, visit thegatescholarship.org.



Wright recognized by Okla. House of Representatives

Kylan Wright, proud member of the Choctaw Nation, was recently recognized by the Oklahoma House of Representatives, on behalf of the great State of Oklahoma, for being a Standout Student Athlete for the Choctaw Yellow Jackets football team.

Kylan has demonstrated exceptional skill leadership and sportsmanship on and off the field, whereas through hard work, dedication and perseverance. As a freshman, Wright provided exemplary leadership that helped guide the Yellow Jackets to victory. In the class 6A-II State Championship, securing the team’s first state title since 1960.



Hussey graduates from US Army RASP

Colin Hussey, a Choctaw tribal member, graduated from the U S Army Ranger Assessment and Selection Program (RASP) at Fort Benning, Georgia, last month. He also successfully completed the U S Army Airborne course.

Specialist Hussey is proud of his Choctaw heritage and would like to thank the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma for all their support over the years.

He is a graduate of the University of North Texas and is the grandson of original tribal member Sam Hussey.



Don Martin elected to Mohave County Board of Supervisors

Last November, Don Martin of Kingman, Arizona, was elected to the District 4 Mohave County Board of Supervisors.

Mohave County is the fifth largest county in the U.S. and the second largest in Arizona.

Martin and his family are proud members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. He is Choctaw through his mother’s family, the Folsoms, who lived in and around Ringling, Oklahoma.

“I spent several summers there as a youth,” said Martin. “My favorite memories are that of fishing in “tanks” as my Uncle Alec Folsom called them, close to Ringling.”

He served in the U.S. Army from 1969-1972 as a Sergeant in military police. After his discharge, he worked for the Kingman Police Department for 14 ½ years and later for the Gilbert Police Department until a job-related injury led to his medical retirement. Martin also owned Arizona Wildlife Outfitters and Striper Hunters until his election in 2024 and is the only Mohave County citizen inducted into Arizona’s Outdoor Hall of Fame. His son, Jimmy Martin, and his grandchildren, Logan and Jace, live in Edmond, Oklahoma.



Valdez earns JOM award

Easton Blaine Valdez, a proud member of the Choctaw Nation, received the 6th-grade boys JOM award for Native American students for 2025.

This award was given by the JOM faculty and staff at the Ataloe Theater at ECU in Ada, Oklahoma, on Sunday, April 13.



Willie turns 88

Choctaw Elder Alta Willie celebrated her 88th birthday in April, surrounded by over 100 friends and family.

“Join us in wishing her a happy birthday and continued health! Happy Birthday Grandma! We all love you so much!” – The Willie Family



Andoe graduates from UCO

Jason and Jodi Andoe are proud to announce the graduation of their daughter, Alysabeth Jayden Andoe, from the University of Central Oklahoma.

Alysabeth earned a double major in Criminal Justice and Forensic Science and will begin her career as a Case Manager with Pivot OKC, serving youth in the Oklahoma City area.

The family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to the Choctaw Nation for the support, encouragement and educational assistance that helped make this accomplishment possible.



Cooper William Wright

Cooper William Wright was born to Chad and Stacey Wright on February 27th, 2025, weighing 6lbs, 14 ounces.

He is the grandson of Nanette and Richard Sells.



Langford wins State Championship

Alyssa Langford, is the 3A State Champion in Pole Vault for the state of Oklahoma. She finished her Sophomore year at Kingstons High School with a PR of 11’6”.

Her team also received the recognition of 3A Academic State Champions for the second year in a row.



Friedel wins State Chili Championship

The 54th Texas Ladies State Chili Championship returned to beautiful Max Starcke Park in Seguin, Texas, on April 12 to crown a new Ladies Chili Champion.

Choctaw tribal member TJ Friedel of Dallas took home the crown.



Hobbs turns 85

Jane Henderson Hobbs turned 85 on April 13, 2025.

Jane was born in Buffalo Valley, Oklahoma, in 1940 to Samuel “Bud” and Barbara Henderson.

A celebration of her birthday was held by her family in her home in Amarillo, Texas.



Blank signs with UCLA Football

Garrison Blank, a member of the Choctaw nation, signed his national letter of intent and is currently attending UCLA on a full football scholarship.

After being Rocklin High School’s (Rocklin, California) most highly recruited athlete in school history, Blank graduated a semester early and enrolled at UCLA. He was a nationally ranked-high school athlete and an excellent student. He received scholarship offers from fourteen Division I universities from all over the country.

Arriving at UCLA in January, Blank has already completed one quarter of classes at the school and has been told that he is on track to get his degree in three years. He is not only excelling in the classroom but also on the football field. He is 6’ 7 1/2” tall and currently weighs 332 pounds. An offensive lineman, the football staff has high hopes for him.

His grandmother, Jeanne Ann, mother, Angela, brother, Gavin and sister, Kendall, are all members of the Choctaw Nation.



Hosay excels in track and field

Tristyn Hosay, 15, is a Choctaw tribal member and Freshman at Milford ISD in Milford, Texas. Tristyn maintains a 4.3 GPA while steadily excelling in basketball and track and field.

She recently placed first in the discus event. Soon after, Tristyn pushed herself to qualify for Regionals, earning her letter-woman’s jacket to help keep her pride in her visions as she progresses academically, athletically and throughout life.

Hosay’s entire family is proud of her and wishes her the best. “We love you, Tristyn. Congratulations.” – The Hosay Family



Hunt graduates from OU

Austin Hunt, who is proudly wearing his Choctaw graduation stole, will graduate Cum Laude with Honors from the University of Oklahoma on May 10, 2025.

He graduated with a Bachelors degree in Business Administration and a minor in Accounting.

While attending OU, Hunt was a member of the OU Presidents Leadership Class, the Kappa Sigma Fraternity, multiple groups and other organizations. While attending OU Hunt learned to speak and write his native Choctaw language, an accomplishment his great-grandmother Loeta Hays would be most proud of.

Hunt will be moving to Denton, Texas in June and starting his career in management with the Aldi Corporation. He is grateful to the Choctaw Nation and all the academic assistance they provided during his four years at OU. Yakoke!



COLLEGE FYI INVITES YOU TO
CAMP CHAHTA

College FYI is hosting the annual Camp Chahta for incoming college freshmen. The camp is designed to orient first-year students to college life and create a close-knit community of Choctaw students.



For more information scan the QR code



Choctaw Nation College Freshman Year Initiative


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SECOND CHANCE RESOURCE FAIR

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Choctaw Nation Health Services **DSU** **MEDICINE**

ITI FABVSSA

The Labor Day Festival and the Annual Iksa Meeting
Part III

By Guest Writer, Reno Crims

This month’s edition of Iti Fabvssa is the third in a three-part series that explored the 1938 rebuild of the Choctaw Capitol building and the roots of today’s Labor Day Festival. This month we will be discussing the 1941 and 1942 meetings and how the annual gathering eventually turned into the Labor Day Festival we all know and love today.

The fourth Annual Iksa Meeting took place at the Capitol on Friday, May 23, 1941, and had the typical food and music. There was also an Ishtaboli game between Goodland and Jones Academy. Goodland won 9-0 and the game was described in detail in the local paper. Thomas Hunter presented a speech titled “Choctaws of Vision.” Although the United States would not enter the war until December of that year, Chief Durant felt that Choctaws should rally to support the recently created national defense program and be “prepared to take the warpath again as American soldiers.” Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Earl Welch, a Chickasaw citizen and local, was also a speaker. The three speeches were translated into Choctaw by James Edwards, who was noted at the time to be a “World War Veteran.” Today, we know him as Choctaw Code Talker James Edwards.

The event had been a large success for four straight years, and the administration rightfully believed they could do more. Later that same year, the Durant Administration created the “Choctaw Indian Fair,” which took place on October 6 and 7 of 1941. Durant and the Advisory Council were able to negotiate with the US Department of Agriculture’s Indian Service to sponsor the event. This iteration of the event introduced more of the carnival elements that we take part in today. Specifically advertised were the showing of quilts, basketry, beadwork, school displays, a canned goods exhibit from local canning clubs and even a nail driving contest for women. A football game was described between Jones and Goodland Academy.

Further developments to the Council Grounds and increasing interest in the event led to regular church services, community singing events and several other offshoots that began with the annual celebration. In documents about the expansion of the grounds and repurposing of the building from 1939 to 1941, the Capitol building was described explicitly as a community center. The administration wanted to use the site as much as possible, with fairs, festivals, political meetings, community outreach and cultural preservation efforts all being centered around the Capitol.

In 1942, the Annual Iksa Meeting that was typically held during May was then moved to October to combine with the 2nd Annual Choctaw Indian Fair. The date was noted to be more significant as the first week of October aligned with the first week of the Choctaw Nation’s government business historically. We see these events conglomerate into something that more closely resembles our current Labor Day Festival.

The general meeting and fair took place on October 5, 1942. On October the 8, a motion was unanimously passed by the Advisory Council and Chief Durant to appropriate the sum of one million dollars of funds on hold at Washington as an endowment for the Goodland Indian Orphanage. With the American war effort in full swing, the presence of great and large pageantry was toned down. The 1942 meeting appears to be the last advertised meeting until after the war. Newspaper records do not detail an annual meeting again until 1948, when newly elected Chief Harry J. W. Belvin “resumed the tradition” and hosted the Choctaw-Chickasaw Labor Day Meet.

The Iksa Organization suffered great loss during the next few years as most of the original Iksa Organization members passed away. In 1943, James Culberson passed, followed by Thomas Hunter in 1944 and Edgar Moore in 1945. Chief William Durant would follow shortly after in the beginning of 1948 followed by Bill Stigler in 1952 and

Ben Dwight in 1953.

From 1938 to present time, we have seen nearly continuous annual gatherings on the Capitol grounds. After the passing of Chief William Durant in 1948, Chief Harry Belvin was elected and created what he called the “Choctaw-Chickasaw Labor Day Meet” citing it as a continuance of earlier Choctaw gatherings at the capitol grounds. These meetings also featured speeches from executive officials, addressing tribal affairs, Choctaw singing, and advocating for tribal members to utilize growing educational and vocational opportunities.

The Labor Day Festival is an annual event of cultural preservation and community gathering that was made with considerable oversight and thought. It has taken place in the same location and observed the same core components for nearly a century. At times, there were brief pauses, such as those during World War II and the COVID-19 pandemic, but the event has routinely been picked back up even after changes in administration.

It is also extremely important that we recognize the efforts of the pre-1948 leadership. The rebuilding of the Capitol and the creation of the Annual Iksa Meeting were done with great care and were intentional about preservation and honoring of the past.

The Choctaw Advisory Council and Iksa Organization were all citizens of the Choctaw Nation. Most of them were children and grandchildren of removal survivors. A portion of the group’s legacy was saving the historic Capitol and converting it into a cultural preservation site. They accompanied this effort with an annual event that heavily featured observances of Choctaw language, sports, politics, crafts, and dances.

The Choctaw Capitol Building and the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival exist as final gifts from members of the old government to their descendants. Durant and Belvin’s administrations focused on what would later be described as “Choctaw Termination,” and the festival operated as a cultural meeting spot for citizens and leaders to gather and discuss how to best “close business.” They created a place and time for discussions to take place about self-governance and the future of the tribe – even when they thought that it would be short-lived.

It is most fortunate that as Choctaw Termination was overturned. The Labor Day Festival remained a set meeting place for tribal members to discuss and, in many cases, organize and lead themselves. The generations used the event effectively to disseminate ideas, petitions and communicate with broader tribal audiences. On occasion, it was even a place of political protest, such as the petition campaign used by Kenneth Ferguson and the Choctaw Historical Iksa, which would result in the complete restoration and formation of the present Tvshkahomma Capitol Museum.

Since 1976, most Choctaw Nation Chiefs have been sworn in at the annual gathering and until recently, the State of the Nation Address was also given on the grounds during the festivities. When Chief Durant and Chief Belvin delivered the State of the Nation at the Capitol, it echoed the traditions of the Choctaw Nation. Today, due to advances in technology, the Choctaw Nation is now able to remotely broadcast the State of the Nation to Tribal Members everywhere.

By revisiting the beginnings of the Choctaw Labor Day Festival and educating those around us on the depths of its history, we broaden our understanding of Oklahoma Choctaw. Understanding the history of the Labor Day Festival is not just about the past, it also strengthens our understanding of important concepts like tribal sovereignty in its many forms. Just as Choctaw people do today, past leaders have used the Capitol Grounds and Annual Gathering as a place to reclaim and redevelop their Nation.

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Stickball Games & Live Music at the Choctaw Capitol in 1939, National Archives (NAID 251706)



IKSA Program Pamphlet from 1941, Tvshkahomma Capitol Museum Archives



Chief Durant, Tribal Council and Choctaws waiting on dinner, and stickball players getting ready to play at the Choctaw Capitol in 1940, National Archives (NAID 251708)

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Trail of Tears Walk 2025



Choctaw tribal members, families, and supporters came together May 17 in remembrance of their ancestors during the annual Trail of Tears Memorial Walk in Tushkahomma.



Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

With temperatures as hot as we are experiencing, it’s best to set your thermostat a little higher during the day to allow your system not to work as hard in cooling your home. HVAC technicians will tell you to set the thermostat at 20 degrees cooler than the outside temperature. Most of us will not set our thermostats above 80 degrees, but when heat indexes are over 105, 75-78 degrees is as low as you should set your system to prevent it from freezing up. If a system is not cooling to the temperature set, setting the temperature colder will not help. It’s best to set the temperature higher to allow the system to rest and then maintain that temperature.

Another thing you can do to keep your system in top working order is to ensure you change your filter regularly. Most calls we send technicians to about a system not working properly involve a clogged filter. Changing your filter monthly is a good rule of thumb, but it should be changed no less than every three months.

Keep your outside unit free of weeds and grass that prevent airflow. It’s also best to keep shrubs away as well.






Lastly, it’s never a bad idea to get your system inspected by a licensed HVAC technician annually to ensure it works properly.

Choctaw Nation

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Housing Authority



Choctaw Nation Healthy Aging Program is there to help elders live their best life

By Chris Jennings

Every day across the Choctaw Nation, someone finds that doing something that was easy not long ago has become harder due to aging. Mowing the yard, taking a bath, getting dressed, or cooking dinner are all things that have to be done, but as time goes on, they can become increasingly difficult.

That’s where the Choctaw Nation Healthy Aging Program comes in. The program helped over 10,000 elders 55 or over last year who lived on the Choctaw Nation Reservation.

Originally the program started making sure elders kept their appointments; they were taking their medications; that they had food; and were safe at home. The program has expanded to cover much more than that now, providing wellness, social services, behavioral health services and case management.

Betty Wharton, director of the Healthy Aging Program said the program helps with the general patients well-being.

“We assist the elders to be able to stay in their home and to be independent,” said Wharton. “That way, it makes them thrive a little better.”

Wharton said they often serve as a sort of go-between for all the different services the Choctaw Nation has available to the elders. Some of those programs include housing, nutrition services, transportation, and emergency assistance.

Protecting the elders from those who might want to cause them harm is also another important service. “Adult Protective Services, if there’s a situation where we feel that there’s an unsafe environment and exploitation may be happening, we look out for that and make sure the elders not being taken advantage of,” said Wharton.

Beth Maples was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 1993 and requires significant daily assistance due to paralysis from the waist down. The Healthy Aging Program helps her with things like showering, dressing, and transportation for medical appointments. “I have to have help getting in bed, out of bed and showering. If it’s something simple, I can cook, but if it’s something major, I don’t even try,” said Maples.

Maples said all of her immediate family members have passed away already and that the program has kept her from having to move into a nursing home.

There are some new things happening with the healthy aging program. “We do have a new tribal Initiative program that if the patient has Medicaid, we can provide durable medical equipment (DME) like handicap ramps, some bathroom modifications, and vouchers for transportation,” said Wharton.

The Healthy Aging Money Follows the Person (MFP) Tribal Initiative is a federal grant Medicaid program established to remove service barriers and make home and community-based services more accessible to seniors and people with disabilities. Through the MFP program, the Healthy Aging Program can assist not just Choctaw tribal members but any CDIB holder living on the reservation by helping with things like ADA-compliant home upgrades, DME, support for transportation and lawn care.

Wharton also said there’s been a change to the Grandparents Raising Children Program. Now, you can be an informal



Photos by Christian Toews

Chair volleyball is one of the many ways the Choctaw Nation helps its elders stay active and engaged with the community.

caregiver and no longer need to be related to the child.

According to Wharton, this opens it up to someone who may be a friend of the family to be able to take care of the child. “They can be an informal caregiver,” said Wharton. “But they’re not being paid through some other system, like the foster system.”

Things the informal caregiver can get help with include:

- Transportation needs
- School supplies
- Cultural activities
- Beading supplies
- Gardening supplies
- Clothing
- Day trips to museums or camps
- School events
- Fishing supplies
- Legal services
- Daycare

Some of the other programs offered to Choctaw elders are:

- 202 Supportive Elder Housing
- Community Health Nursing
- Community Health Representative (CHR)
- Elder Advocacy
- Elder Food Security (ARPA FRF)
- Eyeglasses, Dentures and Hearing Aid Program
- Healthy Aging
- Healthy Living Lending Closet
- Independent Elder Housing

- Nutrition Services
- Senior Nutrition
- Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program

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 (LI-HEAP)
- Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP)
- Medical Services
- Adult Education
- Choctaw Language Classes
- Healthy Lifestyles
- LEAP Homes
- Promoting Active Communities Everywhere (PACE)
- Wellness Center

Some of these programs have eligibility guidelines. Tribal members can find out more about elder services by using the “Elders” filter on the Programs and Services webpage.

Choctaw Community Centers are also a place for elders.

Free weekly meals are served to elders at Choctaw Community Centers throughout the Choctaw Nation.

For more information on services for all ages, visit choctaw-nation.com/services/.



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Chief Gary Batton visits with Elders at the 2025 Elder Appreciation Banquet.



Janie Emmert is given a goodie bag by a CNO employee at the 2025 Elder Appreciation Banquet.



Marlena Montes and Desirae Cooper prepare to serve lunch to the elders at the 2025 Elder Appreciation Banquet.

DIABETES MEDICATION USES

You could be eligible to participate in a research study being done in partnership with the University of Florida if you are at least 18 years old, diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, and receiving medications from CNHSA.

HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED MORE DETAILS?
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Jancy Ross 580.740.8479

Scan for application.

Choctaw NationDepartment of Public Health

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NEW TEMPORARY EXHIBIT
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July 26, 2025 – April 18, 2026

RECEIVE \$50 TO SPEND ON PRODUCE

The Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program offers \$50 in benefits to eligible seniors living in the Choctaw Nation service area. These benefits can be used to buy fresh fruits and vegetables from authorized area farmers.

Choctaw NationSeniors Farmer's Market Nutrition Program

| WIC OFFICE LOCATIONS | | |
|--|---|-------------------|
| LOCATION | DAYS | HOURS |
| Antlers 580.916.5609 | Tuesday | 8:30 am – 4:00 pm |
| Atoka 539.316.2050 | Daily Monday – Friday | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| Battiest 580.241.5458 | 1st Tuesday of every month | 8:30 am – 4:00 pm |
| Broken Bow 539.316.3011 | Daily Monday – Friday (Except the 1st Tuesday & 2nd Thursday of the Month) | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| Durant 539.316.3517 | Daily Monday – Friday | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| Heavener 539.316.4784 | Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| Hugo 539.316.5089 | Monday, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday | 8:00 am – 4:00 pm |
| Idabel 539.316.4313 | Daily Monday – Friday | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| McAlester 539.316.2431 539.316.2430 | Daily Monday – Friday | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| Poteau 539.316.4606 | Daily Monday – Friday | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| Smithville 580.244.3289 | 1st Thursday of every month | 8:30 am – 4:00 pm |
| Spiro 918.962.5134 | Wednesday, Thursday & Friday | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| Stigler 918.967.4211 | Monday & Tuesday | 8:30 am – 4:00 pm |
| Talihina 539.316.6792 | Daily Monday - Friday | 8:00 am – 4:30 pm |
| Wilburton 580.642.7588 | Wednesday | 8:30 am – 4:00 pm |
| Mobile Van 580.380.8193 | 1st Tuesday – Boswell 3rd Tuesday – Coalgate 4th Tuesday - Clayton | 9:00 am – 3:00 pm |
| Choctaw NationHealth Services | | |

| CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION |
|---|
| MARKET HOURS Open 8:30 a.m.- 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday Thursday: 9:30 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. <i>Markets will be closed the last two days of each month for inventory.</i> |
| June 2025 All markets open weekdays, June 2-25 Closed: June 27 & 30 Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation Participants can request a calendar at their location. |
| ANTLERS 400 S.W. “O” ST., 580-298-6443 FOOD DEMO JUNE 6 |
| BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842 FOOD DEMO JUNE 110 |
| DURANT 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773 FOOD DEMO JUNE 20 |
| MCALESTER 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716 FOOD DEMO JUNE 18 |
| POTEAU 106 B St., 918-649-0431 FOOD DEMO JUNE 17 |
| <small><i>This institution is an equal opportunity provider.</i></small> |

| Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation | | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| June 3 | Antlers | 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| June 4 | Talihina | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. |
| June 6 | Atoka | 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. |
| June 6 | Coalgate | 12:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. |
| June 10 | Idabel | 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| June 11 | Poteau | 11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| June 13 | Crowder | By Appointmen |
| June 17 | Wilburton | 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. |
| June 18 | McAlester | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. |
| June 20 | Wright City | 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. |
| June 24 | Broken Bow | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. |
| June 25 | Stigler | By Appointment |
| Durant: Monday, Wednesday and Friday Call 580-640-6007 for an Appointment | | |

New Choctopoly board game might just become your new obsession

By Shelia Kirven

Do you love playing the board game MONOPOLY? From collecting \$200 after passing GO to buying as much property on the board as you can and buying houses and hotels so you can charge your co-players rent when they land on your property, it is always a fun and competitive time for all.

What if you could play the game, but instead of buying up properties like Boardwalk and Park Place, everything on the board was all about the Choctaw Nation? Well, now you can with CHOCTOPOLY.

Like MONOPOLY, you must choose your game piece before playing the game. Each of the six game pieces is significant to the Choctaw story. Here are some brief descriptions of the game pieces used in CHOCTOPOLY.

- Buffalo (Yvnnash): A white buffalo is considered sacred to Native Americans, representing hope, abundance and the renewal of life.
- Corn (Tanchi): Corn was the most important of all the crops that the Choctaw grew, contributing an estimated 2/3 of the Choctaw subsistence diet.
- Snake (Sinti): The Choctaws appreciated the snake because it ate insects and small animals that could destroy food crops.
- C-Feather: A more modern symbol, the C-Feather is the primary branding element of Choctaw economic ventures.
- Raccoon (Shawi): The raccoon appears in many Choctaw legends and folk stories, Opossum and Raccoon being one of the most popular.
- Slot Machine: Today, the Choctaw tribe thrives and utilizes casino profits for health care, infrastructure, and the

general welfare of its members. The game's timeline follows Hina Hanta (The Bright Path), a sacred way of life God has given to the Choctaw people, with events along that path—from thousands of years ago to the current generation.

While making your way around the CHOCTOPOLY board, you will encounter names of places and landmarks that are significant to the Choctaw Nation, including Wheelock Academy, Jones Academy, the Choctaw Cultural Center, Talimena Drive, the Choctaw Code Talkers Monument, the Judicial Center, Choctaw Landing and Tvshka Homma.

Resort properties (Durant, Grant, Pocola and Choctaw Landing) replaced the railroads that were in the original MONOPOLY game.

Other significant places highlighted in CHOCTOPOLY include the Choctaw Travel Plazas, cultural aspects, the Wellness Center, and memorials such as Code Talkers and Sacred Heart, Council House, Chapel at Tvshka Homma, and old and new headquarters.

When you pass GO in CHOCTOPOLY, you still get \$200, but it is paid with money with familiar faces in Choctaw present day and history.

How did CHOCTOPOLY come about? So glad you asked!

The Choctaw Retail Operations Merchandising Department, with the help of internal Marketing and Creative Services, began the process after Janie Dillard, the previous Senior Executive Officer of Commerce, saw a similar version and thought it might be good for the Choctaw Nation to have its own game.

There are now many versions of the original MONOPOLY game specific to various places, people, and subjects.

After several meetings, emails back and forth, and phone calls with the production company,



Choctaw Nation Photo

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma recently released its very own board game. Modeled after the world's most popular board game, MONOPOLY, CHOCTOPOLY takes players on a journey that celebrates the Choctaw Nation's culture, history, landscape and people.

Late in the Sky, CHOCTOPOLY was created using the company's customizable templates with Choctaw Nation-specific information.

The Choctaw Nation team that worked on the game creation sent the company ideas for game pieces, Community Chest and Chance cards, spaces on the game board, even down to what to put on the money.

The Choctaw Language and Cultural Services departments were also pulled in to verify historical information.

"The whole game is custom specifically for Choctaw Nation," said Jill Euper, Director of Choctaw Merchandising and Retail.

Euper continued, "This was about two years in the making with different hands helping and different departments helping, and we were truly able to customize every part of the game and get the historic timelines and cultural details accurate and correct."

Playing CHOCTOPOLY is sure to be great fun for the entire family, and the game can also

serve as an opportunity to teach Choctaw history and culture to the entire family.

Purchase your new CHOCTOPOLY game and begin the fun today! At \$34.95, it's affordable and will surely be a favorite gift item for everyone. It is never too early to purchase CHOCTOPOLY to put back for family Christmas and birthday gifts.

CHOCTOPOLY is available for purchase at your the following locations:

- Choctaw Travel Plazas (17 locations in southeastern Oklahoma)
- Country Markets (Clayton, Boswell and Coalgate, Oklahoma)
- Choctaw Landing
- Choctaw Cultural Center
<https://hvshi.choctawculturalcenter.com/search/choctopoly/>
- Choctaw Store – Durant Headquarters
<https://www.choctawstore.com/search/CHOCTOPOLY/>



Choctaw Nation Photo

Choctopoly is officially available at Choctaw Travel Plaza and Choctaw Country Market, but not for long! With limited copies and exclusive game pieces, this collector's game is a must-grab!

BRINGING FABLES TO

TABLES

Available at Choctaw Travel Plazas, Country Markets and The Mercantile at Choctaw Landing.

CHOCTOPOLY

INSPIRED BY TRADITION. BUILT FOR GAME NIGHT FUN.

Scan to learn more about the lineup

CHOCTAW LABOR DAY FESTIVAL

Here is the announcement you've been waiting for!

2025 ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE

CHOCTA.WS/LD-ENTERTAINMENT

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

SEE AND SHARE OUR STORIES AT

TogetherWereMore.com

Choctaw Nation

SCAN CODE TO VIEW STORIES

CHOCTAW LABOR DAY FESTIVAL

INFORMATION UPDATES

For more information, visit laborday.choctawnation.com. To stay update to on all Labor Day information, text **LABORDAY to 888777.**

Labor Day Games and Tournaments - Pre-register for individual and team events for this year's Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival. Deadline for online registrations is August 1, 2025.

Gospel Singing - Choctaw Gospel singers and groups can now sign up for the Annual Labor Day Festival Gospel Singing. Applications will be accepted from July 7 – July 11, 2025. Please call 580-642-6722 and leave your name, contact number and group name (if applicable). Event staff will contact selected participants once lineup has been selected.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma ♦ TOGETHER WE'RE MORE ♦

June (Chun) 2025

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Check out the 2025 Tribal Election Guide.

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The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma prioritize health and happiness of tribal elders.

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