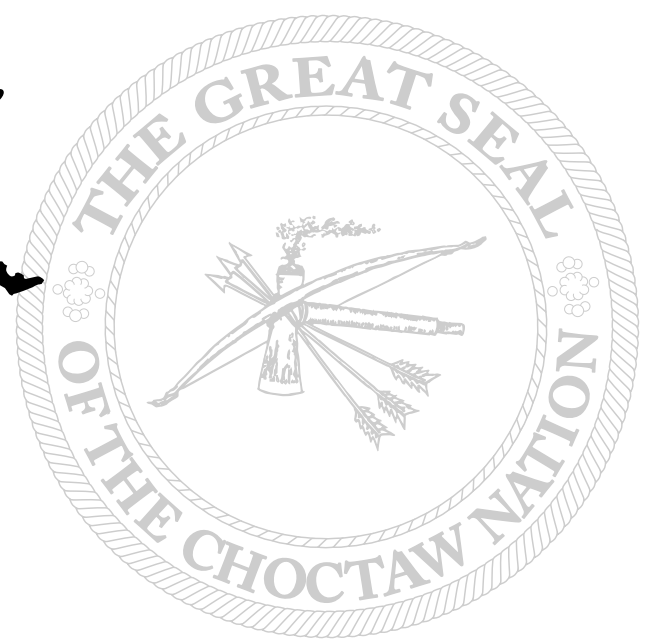


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CHOCTAW NATION

The Official Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

March 2015 Issue

2015 Trail of Tears Walk

May 16 • Tvshka Homma

The Trail of Tears Commemorative Walk will be held at Tvshka Homma on Saturday, May 16.

The purpose of this annual event is to honor and recognize the Choctaws who were forced to march from their ancient homelands to Indian Territory nearly two centuries ago. Many died along the Trail and we gather to honor them, as well as the survivors who became the foundation for today's Choctaw Nation.

An opening prayer will be held at 10 a.m., then the Choctaw Nation Color Guard will lead the Walk. Chief of the Choctaw Nation Gary Batton will follow with Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., the Tribal Council and Choctaw royalty along with the hundreds of Choctaws and friends who will make the Walk.

A program will follow the Walk on the Capitol Grounds at Tvshka Homma to include messages from Chief Batton, Assistant Chief Austin and Council Speaker Delton Cox.

Activities will include gospel singing in the traditional Choctaw style and Chahta Anumpa language, cultural demonstrations, basket weaving, beading, pottery, and Choctaw social dancers.

Lunch will be served in the cafeteria and shuttle buses will be available between parking site and the Capitol.

◆ What's inside

Columns	2
Nursery News	4
Food Distribution	4
Notes to the Nation	5
Obituaries	6
People You Know	10
Ili Fabvssa	12
Meet the Artist	13

The Mission of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

To enhance the lives of all members through opportunities designed to develop healthy, successful and productive lifestyles.

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<http://www.choctawnation.com/news-room/biskinik-newspaper-archive/>



First tribal Promise Zone Summit hosted by Choctaws



Photos by Zach Maxwell

Promise Zone Summit participants tour the grounds of the Choctaw Nation Capitol at Tvshka Homma on March 6.

Key players from local, tribal and federal stakeholders gather for two-day event

By ZACH MAXWELL

Choctaw Nation

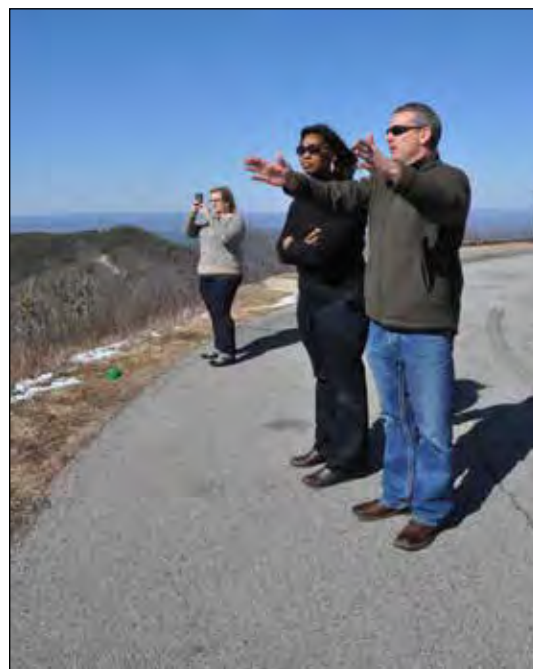
Choctaw Nation hosted the first tribal Promise Zone Summit in early March, a two-day event which brought federal, tribal and local partners together for the common goal of improving the lives of rural Oklahomans.

"It's encouraging to see everyone come together to improve the lives of not only tribal members, but all the people of southeast Oklahoma," said Jesse Pacheco, Senior Executive Director of Administrative Services for Choctaw Nation. "I look for good things to come from this meeting."

Wintry weather put a dent in the first-day agenda at Choctaw Resort and Casino, but organizers adapted and the 75 people who attended were able to break into four focus groups.

The second day of the summit was a tour of Choctaw Nation facilities, properties and Promise Zone potential beneficiary sites in six counties. A dozen people representing the tribe and several federal agencies were able to experience the rural challenges and the economic potential of the Choctaw Nation.

President Barack Obama has identified the Choctaw Nation as the first tribal area among a group of nationwide "Promise Zones," areas of



Brian McClain of Choctaw Nation with HUD Field Office Director Sharon Gordon-Ribeiro and Promise Zone Coordinator Sara Jane Smallwood at the Panorama Vista on Winding Stair Scenic Drive.

economic hardship such as rural Kentucky and inner-city Philadelphia. Along with Promise Zone designation comes a variety of potential incentives for business development and job creation in economically depressed areas.

Tina Foshee-Thomas, mayor of Idabel, attended the summit to gather ideas and suggestions to improve the recent status McCurtain County has gained: The most unemployed county in Oklahoma.

"We're right in the corner of the wood basket of Oklahoma," she said, referring to the timber industry. "But we recently lost a potential industry because we don't have the natural gas they needed. We have a hard time getting retail to locate there because of our size."

Still, Foshee-Thomas can see a lot of potential in McCurtain County—and plenty of ways where the Promise Zone designation can step in to help things along. "Idabel is the gateway for one of the largest tourism areas in Oklahoma. (The summit) gave me some ideas, to offer incentive loans for small businesses to come in. It's been very helpful."

Ryan McMullen, State Director for USDA Rural Development, led one of the four round-table discussions about community development. "It was an outstanding conversation in putting pieces together in which communities can partner with Choctaw Nation," he said.

Other discussions focused upon business, education and agricultural issues. Participants included Southeastern Oklahoma State University President Sean Burrage, Durant City Manager James Dunegan, as well as representatives from the U.S. Public Health Service, FEMA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

A day-long tour offered the opportunity for some of the Promise Zone partners to visit a wellness center and greenhouse in Atoka, Choctaw Nation Hospital in Talihina, the tribal museum at Tvshka Homma, Winding Stair scenic byway and small businesses in Clayton.

The group visited the Cowboy's Sweetheart gift shop in downtown Clayton, the type of family-owned storefront that contributes to the cycle of growth and job creation envisioned by the Promise Zone.

Owners Dusty and Karen Smallwood took over an existing gift shop and added amenities such as ice cream and floral arrangements. In one corner they offer grape juice from a vineyard in Arkansas (supporting locally-grown produce), all displayed on a stand created by local welder (and self-employed Choctaw tribal member) Adrian Johnico.

Promise Zone partners seek to support and replicate the success of the Smallwoods, as well as that of Pushmataha Family Medical Clinic, also in Clayton. This clinic serves the local population but got a big boost from an expansion made possible in part with USDA Rural Development programs.

Without the clinic, many people would have to make trips to medical facilities in faraway places like Fort Smith, Tulsa, or Paris, Texas.

Those benefits for Pushmataha County medical clients could be echoed for everyone who will benefit from the ongoing Promise Zone efforts within the Choctaw Nation.

Are you in the Promise Zone? To see an interactive map of the Choctaw Nation Promise Zone go to:

www.choctawnation.com/tribal-economy/promise-zone-information/

New ventures planned in Antlers and Bethel/Battiest area

By BRANDON FRYE & RONNI PIERCE

Choctaw Nation

The awakening of spring marked the breaking of ground for three new Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) ventures.

In February a groundbreaking ceremony was held for the new community center and pre-school in the Bethel/Battiest area. The site of the new community center and pre-school is more centrally located between Bethel and Battiest, approximately 1 3/4 miles east of Battiest on Main County Road. The 7,956-square-foot location will give citizens from both areas better access to community gatherings. Construction on both is expected to be completed September 2015.

The pre-school will accommodate up to 25 students in a school-readiness program for 3-to 4-year-olds. It will have an indoor safe room, the classroom will be equipped with newer technology such as a smart board, and it will have a larger dining area that can be utilized for parent/staff meetings.

"These people need this, it is something that has been needed for a long time," said Tony Messenger, District 2 Tribal Council member. Speaking of the community center, Messenger added, "I hope everyone uses it and recognizes it for what it is, it's for the gathering of our Choctaw people and for our communities."



Shovels turn for a new Travel Plaza and Casino Too in Antlers on March 6. This is the first Choctaw Nation Travel Plaza in Pushmataha County.



Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr., and Council Members break the ground of the new Bethel and Battiest Community Center and Pre-School alongside students, elders, and educators from the area on Feb. 10.

And in March, CNO representatives and city officials met in Antlers to break ground on the new 10,254-square-foot Travel Plaza and Casino Too. The new 24-hour facility is the first CNO travel plaza to feature a Choctaw Country Welcome Center dedicated to showcasing tourism information, Choctaw culture, and Choctaw-made items for sale.

"It's about complementing this community and bringing the people services that help them," noted Chief Gary Batton. The business will employ approximately 40 people from the area. And according to Antlers Mayor Mike Burrage, "We are thankful for the Choctaw Nation and the economic impact the Nation is bringing."

The facility is expected to be completed in early Summer 2015.

FAITH, FAMILY AND CULTURE



Hard work pays off for Choctaw youth

It is a tremendous privilege to have the opportunity to support our Choctaws as they work to accomplish the goals they set for themselves. A perfect example of this is the support we are able to provide for our Choctaw youth who raise show animals and participate in the livestock shows in Oklahoma. I have attended several livestock premium shows in the last few weeks and I consistently see groups of boys and girls who have successfully undertaken the responsibility of caring for their animals and participating in the livestock shows through organizations like 4-H and FFA.

It always makes me proud to see our kids participating in 4-H and FFA. I participated in both while growing up and

know showing an animal is not easy. These youth come from great families whose values are honesty, hard work, and respect. They are very responsible.

Livestock is just one component of the organizations. The youth learn all about agriculture, business management, public speaking and more. They learn life skills and become leaders in their communities. I also believe it helps them to become great parents and they share the values they have learned with their children.

The livestock shows in our area include divisions of hogs, cattle, goats and sheep. From the time the kids get their young animal to raise, they start developing a plan. They adjust their hours to be able to feed, groom and tend to the animals every day. This schedule builds work ethics for a lifetime.

Every year, the Choctaw Nation purchases Choctaw students' animals at premium shows throughout the 10 1/2 counties. The Councilmen, Assistant Chief and I enjoy attending these shows and watching the interaction between the boys and girls and their animals.

The students are given the option to keep the animal and many go on to show at the state level. Most will keep their hog or heifer for breeding purposes and start planning for the next year. It's important to give back in a way that helps these young people meet their personal potential and achieve their dreams. I encourage everyone to attend a premium show and support the youth in your area. Watch them work with their animals. It's a great experience and a lot of fun!



The Choctaws' history of giving

The Choctaw people knew extreme hunger for months on the Trail of Tears. Most of us have no comprehension of the pain and anguish they felt, not only because of their own emptiness but because they were helplessly watching loved ones die.

Serving others has always been a part of Choctaw traditional life. Just a few years after arriving in Indian Territory, our Choctaw ancestors learned of another group of people who were starving. The memories of having no food were still very fresh on their minds.

A disease was ruining the potatoes in Ireland in the 1840s.

Almost a quarter of Ireland's citizens relied completely on the potato for food, so they, too, were dying. History tells us a million people starved during the Great Famine.

In 1847, while they were still trying to establish a new life in a new land, Choctaw men and women donated \$170 to people in need over 4,000 miles away. They weren't helpless anymore. They wanted to reach out a helping hand to the citizens of Ireland.

The amount may not seem like much but a dollar in 1847 is equivalent to \$28.57 today. This story always amazes me. I am so proud of the example set for us.

I see the same caring examples being set today—donations of money, time, food, work and encouragement. Choctaw people give to assist in other states such as Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. They still reach across the world to aid victims through disaster relief efforts.

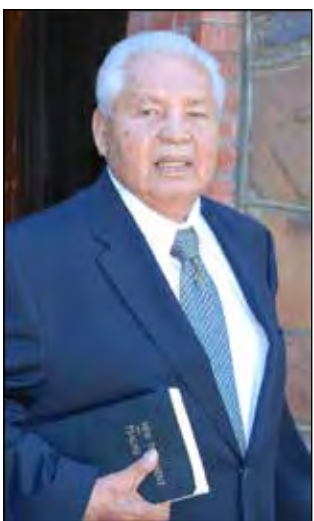
And they give closer to home. Volunteers help with clothes closets, coat and shoe drives, Meals on Wheels, and food banks.

If a family loses everything in a fire, the word is passed around and soon there are clothes, furniture, and household goods available to set up another home. Communities rally in support to help rebuild after storms or comfort a grieving family.

Servant leadership means to guide others to do good, to set the example. I see examples every day of selfless giving and am thankful to be part of such a caring Nation.

Chaplain's Corner

Easter and the Cross



Rev. Bertram Bobb
Tribal Chaplain

Easter Sunday is on April 5. I wish you a Happy Easter. Jesus Christ has Risen from the grave.

He Lives.

The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross of Calvary. He died for our salvation. We do not worship that cross, we worship Jesus Christ who died on that cross and was buried and rose again. Among all the emblems of the world, the cross is admired with awe.

The history of the cross goes back long before Christ came.

The greatest use of it was by the Romans who used it to execute people. The victim was fastened to the cross by cords, or his hands were nailed, and he was left to die. Even with the heat of the sun and the pull of the body, it took sometimes a week to die on a cross. It was one of the most terrible, painful ways to die.

But the Christians started to use the cross as a symbol of Christianity. Every time the gospel is proclaimed, those who hear the message and receive Jesus Christ come by the way of the cross, by faith.

Do you know who killed Christ? All of us. Our sins put Him on the cross. We all had a part in His death. Jesus Christ's death was planned before the foundation of the world because of sin. The Bible says in Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Let's look at the breadth of the cross. The love of Christ is manifested in the cross to everybody.

God's love extends to all nationalities of the whole world. It includes you, whoever you are, whatever your religion, or if you have no religion. God loves you.

The world population is

increasing, yet the Lord loves us all. From the cross Jesus Christ could think of each person as though he were the only person in the whole world.

Then there is the length of the cross. It has no measure. It extends from eternity to eternity, from everlasting to everlasting.

If you build a house you can measure the lumber with a tape measure. But how can you measure

God's love in the cross?

The Bible says that God's love "passeth knowledge" (Ephesians 3:19). There is no way that our finite minds can even begin to understand the love that God had for us when He gave His Son on the cross to die for us, because you and I deserve death. We deserve His judgment and hell.

Then there is the height of the cross—it extends to the throne of God. We don't know exactly where heaven is. Heaven is a place and it is going to be a beautiful place.

It doesn't matter how high heaven is. You cannot go beyond God's love. Through the cross God draws all people to Himself. But you have to make a decision about Jesus Christ.

You have to receive Him personally as your Savior.

Then I think about the depth of God's love in the cross. If you have fallen into a pit of sin and degradation, you still aren't beyond the love of God. The cross covers to the very gates of hell.

It can draw every sinner up to the height of heaven. Jesus said, in John 12:32, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

And Jesus is in heaven.

There are many prophecies in the Old Testament regarding the cross. There is Genesis 22, Psalm 22, Isaiah 53 and Leviticus 16 that especially deal with the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Those writers of the Old Testament were under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus was quoting the Scriptures in Matthew 27:46 when

He said: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

That's a quote from Psalm 22:1. God is holy. You will never understand the Old Testament with all of its blood sacrifices.

You will never understand the death of Christ on the cross, until you under-

stand that God is a holy and righteous and pure God. He cannot even look upon evil. (Habakkuk 1:13).

In that terrible time of the agony of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, a shadow came between God the Father and God the Son. God cannot look upon sin, and in that moment He was laying your sins and my sins on Christ. Christ was suffering for us.

Jesus was King of Kings and Lord of Lords, but He was lonely on that cross because of you and me. In that most serious moment we read in II Corinthians 5:21: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

That means that He had never known sin, never told a lie, never had an evil thought, never had any greed or lust. Then all of the filth and dirt from your life and my life descended on Him.

None of us will ever understand the mystery of that moment. It was God's great love for each of us that allowed His Son to take that suffering.

Jesus said in John 19:28 in fulfillment of Psalm 69:21: "I thirst." They gave Him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall.

When that drink had been offered earlier He had refused it.

Why? Because it would have taken away some of the suffering. (Matthew 27:34; 48). He was there to take all the suffering in consciousness for you and for me.

Today people will do anything to avoid pain and depression.

That is why there is alcoholism, and people drug themselves rather than suffer from depression and loneliness. Jesus was offered a drug to dull the pain, but He suffered the terrible agony and carried our sins on the cross in full consciousness. And if you had been the only person in the world, He would have died for you.

Yes, my friend, Jesus loved us. He paid the penalty for sin. God the Father was satisfied with Jesus' substitutionary death. He sent the Holy Spirit to raise Him from the dead. (Romans 8:11).

May God bless you and your loved ones. I pray for our leaders and our servicemen and women.

Spotlight on Elders

with

Ralph Williston

By LISA REED

Choctaw Nation

Music man ...teacher... author ... educator ... teller Ralph Williston of Dearborn, Missouri, is spending his "retirement years" continuing a legacy handed down by his father.

"My father, Henry S. Williston, was known as the 'music man' in high school because he could play any instrument," Ralph said. "My twin brother and I were born when he was teaching music at Chilocco Indian Boarding School near Ponca City. As children and teenagers, our home was always filled with music." Like his father, Ralph is known as the "music man" at his church and, also, like his father, Ralph is a teacher and teller.

"A full-blood Choctaw, my father was born in Indian Territory on an unknown date around 1906 or 1907 in a log cabin outside of Broken Bow. His parents died when he was a child. His only memory of his father was hearing him playing the violin as he was coming home after playing for a dance. Dad ended up at Chilocco Boarding School where he turned to music to overcome the oppression of those days. One of the reasons that Choctaw was spoken 'very little in our home' was the result of his experience in boarding schools ... as he said, 'I would get my fingers hit hard with a ruler if I talked any Choctaw word so I had to learn and speak what was called English'.

"Dad ran away from Chilocco with a friend, Harrison," Ralph tells as he weaves a pattern in the fabric of his heritage. "Dad and his friend hopped trains until they got to Bacone Boarding School near Muskogee, Oklahoma, where he finished high school. My middle name is Harrison, named in honor of his good friend.

"Dad, as a high school student orphan, sold his land allotment on his home land because he was told that he had not paid his back taxes," Ralph said. "He saved his money so that he could attend Northeastern Teachers College (now Northeastern University in Tahlequah) where he earned a bachelor's degree in music education. He became one of the few Choctaw with a college degree and this was during the late 1930s, the depression years. Dad served in the National Guard in those days and remembered that he was part of a circle of guardsmen around a plane that had a strange name, Spirit of Saint Louis!

"As a teacher Dad returned to the same boarding school (Chilocco) where he had so many memories and taught music to natives of all grades. He would spend 25 years teaching thousands of children, youth, band, and vocal music in public schools in Wyandotte and Fairland where he fell in love with Mable, my Mom. Dad also taught in Quapaw,

Commerce, and Webbers Falls. He taught in Pamona, Kan., where I graduated high school third in my class of 13. Dad went back to school in Mexico to learn Spanish because of the similarities he found in the Choctaw and Spanish languages. He taught Spanish for another 10 years. He earned a master's degree from Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kan., where I would also earn my master's in science education years later."

While growing up, Ralph and his twin brother, Rolland, hiked and visited homes in the small Oklahoma communities where they lived. Ralph's love of telling grew as they absorbed memories and stories handed down through the ages.

Rolland eventually became the Native American Specialist for a World Church and invited Ralph to visit a number of native tribes.

"I would sit all night and listen to the native storytellers," Ralph remembers. "When I came home from these trips I would first tell some of these stories to our young children. I discovered that the magic of those old stories actually held their attention. Then I went to an elementary class, a library event, then a church, and church camp and watched the children as I shared some of these stories. They didn't move! The rest is history. That started over 30 years ago."

After collecting several stories, his adult children encouraged him to put the "Great Spirit" stories into books. He began the "Little Eagle" series of books in 2000 and now has nine self-published books including seven large-format books for children—"Catch A Rabbit," "Attacked by an Eagle," "Follow the Trail," "Fur From a Bear," "Corn Seed Test," "Lost," "Swim the River" and two chapter books, "Trapped on a Cliff" and "Snake Bit."

In them, a young boy, Little Eagle, is given challenges by his grandfather and often finds himself in trouble. He remembers that his grandfather always said, "Ask the Great Spirit for help." He listens and follows the guidance and passes his tests toward becoming a village scout. Ralph has now collected 40 stories including those of a young girl, "White Dove," and her native adventures which he hopes to get into books someday, he says.



Photo Provided

Henry S. Williston



Photo Provided

Ralph Williston with a group of eager and enraptured listeners.

"Former Councilman, historian and storyteller Charley Jones was an inspiration," Ralph said. "I remember when I shared my father's story of 'How the Great Spirit Created Man' with Charley, his eyes just glowed. 'I shared with Charley how Dad had told that story for 35 years to thousands of children and adults and how I now get to tell that story to another generation in his honor. When I sit down with the children, I sometimes wear the same necklace that he wore when he sat down with the children.'"

cont'd on page 13

Over 18 years old?

Don't forget to update your membership card

If you have recently turned 18 or will be turning 18 within the next 60 days and have not yet obtained your Adult Membership card please complete a new Tribal Membership application and return to the Choctaw Nation Tribal Membership Department. The application can be found online at www.choctawnation.com or by contacting the Tribal Membership office at (800) 522-6170 or (580) 924-8280.

BUSINESS

Preferred Supplier Program continues to promote Choctaw businesses

By BRANDON FRYE
Choctaw Nation

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) Preferred Supplier Program (PSP), led by Boyd Miller, continues to serve the Choctaw people by bringing Native-owned businesses into contact with more and better commercial opportunities.

The goal of the PSP is to direct the business and trade of the Nation and other organizations to established Native and minority businesses. It is an effort to support local buying and growth development, expansion, and increased use of business enterprises owned by Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal members, other Native Americans, and other federally recognized minorities.

"We strive to continually develop and provide the most beneficial programs to our Choctaw-owned business members while seeking best value and performance for purchases by the Choctaw Nation through our supplier program," Miller said. "We promote accountability to our members, sustainability,



Photos by Brandon Frye

(Left to right) Sherlynn Kennedy, Brigette Viehe, Mike Viehe, Boyd Miller, and Billy Hamilton check out the easily recognized logo on a Servpro vehicle. Hamilton and Kennedy with Business Development, and Miller with Preferred Supplier Program, had just met with Mr. and Mrs. Viehe about their business.

growth, diversity, and the creation of jobs throughout the Choctaw Nation."

For Choctaw business owners, making use of the PSP means gaining a preferred supplier status, and being certified in this way comes with a number of perks.

When a job needs to be done, when a service needs to be performed, when a product needs to be sold, PSP puts Choctaw businesses to use. Miller and the PSP maintain a registry of qualified businesses for this very purpose, so tribal businesses can be shared and made available when work needs to be done.

A complete online directory will be available to not only organizations looking to pay for work, but also the public looking for services and products at an individual level.

The program also gathers a directory of qualified businesses or vendors and gives them equal opportunity to submit bids for big jobs like construction, an opportunity which might not be available without having the support of the Nation through PSP.

To make this bidding process even more accessible, an online bid board is in the works, which will make it easier for registered members of PSP to compete for bigger jobs and sales. This will allow vendors with a preferred supplier status more visibility with current and future CNO business opportunities as well.

Since the Choctaw Nation PSP got its start last year, it has already registered more than 200 businesses fitting into 39 different categories. It has aided and advocated for these Choctaw businesses.

Like the Hamilton family and their Achukma Pecan Oil, whose product, after receiving support from PSP, now sits on Choctaw Travel Plaza shelves waiting to be purchased. Boyd Miller brought the right people from within the Choctaw Nation—people from the Marketing Department and Business Development—in to help Achukma Pecan Oil get their business prepared and product ready to be sold at Choctaw Nation locations.

PSP works with growing business, but also established big businesses, like Bill McClure's Coffee.org. This business, a



Bill McClure, owner of Coffee.org and Miss Ellie's Coffee, presents examples of how his company can supply and help market coffee products across the Choctaw Nation.

coffee vendor already supplying goods to the Creek, Cherokee, and Chickasaw Nations, is partnering with PSP and the Choctaw Nation to offer new jobs and training to Choctaw people.

Even businesses outside of the boundaries of the Choctaw Nation have this aid and advocacy available to them. Like Brigette and Mike Viehe, who own and operate a Servpro clean-up business out of Texas. They are looking to expand their service area, to help residents within the Choctaw Nation when fire or water emergencies strike. Miller and the PSP are currently in the process of helping make that possible.

For Choctaws looking to support fellow Choctaws by buying their products or making use of their services, it is as simple as visiting preferredsuppliers.choctawnation.com, clicking on the Preferred Suppliers Listing link, and selecting from the list of certified vendors.

For Choctaw business people and entrepreneurs, becoming a certified vendor with PSP is as simple as creating your company profile and registering on the website, providing the appropriate documents, as well as a capabilities statement. Should you have any questions or need help in the development and registering of your business please contact Boyd Miller, Program Manager, at (580) 924-8280, ext. 2889.

Career development event draws 1,600 to McAlester

By ZACH MAXWELL
Choctaw Nation

McAlester played host to one of Oklahoma's premiere job readiness gatherings on Feb. 25 as the eighth annual Choctaw Nation Career Expo drew more than 1,600 participants to the Southeast Expo Center.

With a theme of "Keeping it Real... Real Choices, Real Jobs, Real LIFE!" the event attracted hundreds of high school and vocational school students as well as job seekers from Oklahoma and Arkansas. More than 100 exhibitors represented employers and universities from across Oklahoma and beyond.

"This event will help students get ready for real life, as well as those looking for a job change," said Jana Taylor from Choctaw Nation Career Development. "We try to pull it all together for a one stop place to have all these resources."

The trade-show atmosphere allowed a variety of employers and college recruiters to interact one-on-one with job seekers and students from dozens of area school districts and vocational technology centers. The centerpiece was a colorful "Game of Life" area where participants walked through a life-size game board to job readiness and college financial aid stations.



Trooper Ron Watson of Oklahoma Highway Patrol demonstrates a radar gun for a group of McAlester High School students during the 2015 Choctaw Nation Career Expo.

"It's a good thing to walk around and meet all these people," said Jeremy Watts, a welding student at Kiamichi Technology Center in Stigler. "Actually I met with a lady from Spartan College about their Non-destructive Testing program."

It was this sort of hands-on, student-tailored contact which employers and recruiters sought and found at the Career Expo. At another booth, Oklahoma Highway Patrol showed students some of the high-tech equipment they use daily in law enforcement.

"This event means a lot, these are the ones who are up and coming," said OHP Trooper Ron Watson, who was showing a group of high school students how to use a radar gun. "Their computer skills are out of this world and it's a diverse world out there, so being bilingual is a plus. We're here looking for everyone who meets the criteria."

Guest speaker Bill Cordes addressed a group of 1,200 students with his inspirational "YO-GOWYPI" message: "You only get out what you put in."

"We all get so easily conditioned. But if you want something out of life, it's important to be engaged in life," Cordes said. "If you made it this far, somewhere inside of you, you want more than to just get by."

This year, the Career Expo "hot spots" included a Veterans Resource Center, OSU Industrial Technology section, Choctaw Nation educational resources and employment resources that included a "Networking Zone" and a job application lab.

Tribal Council holds regular session

The Choctaw Nation Tribal Council met in regular session Feb. 14 at Tvshka Homma. Council bills presented included an Election Ordinance and approval to distribute a form to establish a list of tribal voters open to tribal election candidates. The Chief and Council have worked over the last several months to develop reform that increases transparency so that every action taken brings honor and pride to Choctaw people. Everyone involved in this reform had to give and take to reach a compromise that is best for our people.

- The right for information on all candidates for Chief and Council to be placed in the Biskinik
- The right of tribal members to share or keep private their personal information in voter communication
- Allow watchers to see when absentee ballots are received and when they are counted. Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr., and Tribal Council agree this action is just the beginning of things needed to focus on for reform. The Nation will continue to define and refine as well as continue to strive to be fair and transparent.

In other business, letters of consideration

were presented recommending appointment of Margaret Jackson and reappointment of Judy Ogle, Kay Green, and Jane Parent to the Choctaw Nation Election Board. Also presented and approved were:

- Applications for the COPS Tribal Resources Equipment/Training Grant; the Chi Hullo Li program; and the Sustainable Employment and Economic Development Strategies
- Submission of an applications for SBA 8(a) Program Participation and Limited Waivers of Sovereign Immunity for Defense Manufacturing and Defense Munitions
- Disposal of surplus equipment
- Amend CB-28-14 to correct the legal description for right-of-way number T-146 in McAlester
- An electric line easement with OG&E for the Rubin White Health Clinic expansion in Poteau
- Authorization to place property in Bryan County and Pittsburg County in trust status

The Tribal Council meets at 10 a.m. on the second Saturday of each month in the Council Chambers at Tvshka Homma.



USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist, Gary O'Neill reminds potential applicants to contact their local NRCS office to find out if they are eligible for financial assistance to apply conservation practices through the agency's Organic Initiative available through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Applications can be submitted year around, but the cut-off date for applicants to be considered for financial assistance in fiscal year 2015 has been extended to March 20, 2015. To find an NRCS office near you an office locator is available at: <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov/locator/app?agency=nrcs>

Mr. O'Neill states that "there is increasing interest on the part of consumers to purchase organically grown foods, leading to increased demand for organic producers." As State Conservationist for Oklahoma, "we are pleased to be able to offer this Conservation program to Oklahoma producers and we encourage producers to take advantage of them."

NRCS in Oklahoma has allocated substantial funds to make financial and technical assistance available to certified organic producers, those who want to make the transition to organic production, and producers who sell less than \$5,000 in organic products annually.

As part of EQIP, the Organic Initiative offers a wide array of conservation practices specifically designed for organic production. "Practices will help the selected applicants meet many requirements of their USDA Organic System Plans and stay in compliance with USDA's National Organic Program," O'Neill said.

More can be learned about the Organic Initiative at: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=nrcs143_008224



The CSBDS provides business assistance to Choctaw tribal entrepreneurs that want to start or expand their business.

Choctaw Tribal members that utilize the services will receive specialized technical assistance through one-on-one business counseling, training workshops, an extensive network of business assistance programs and educational networking opportunities. Assistance offered includes, but is not limited to:

- Business Planning
- Access to Financing
- Marketing
- Business Counseling
- 8(a) Certification Assistance
- Business Taxes
- Business Registration
- Minority Business Registration
- Bid Assistance

March-April Events Calendar:

(Please contact CSBDS for more details and to register)

- March 31st - Idabel - Contracting Opportunities for Businesses
- April 9th - Durant - Contracting Opportunities for Businesses
- April 14 - Stigler - Small Business Counseling Day
- April 16 - Antlers - Small Business Counseling Day
- April 23 - Durant - Oklahoma Tax Workshop
- April 28 - Poteau - QuickBooks Training

Contact Billy Hamilton, Small Business Development Services Manager today!

bhamilton@choctawnation.com or 580-924-8280 ext.2901

Choctaw Nation Can Aid With Loans

The Southeastern Oklahoma Indian Credit Association offers small business, home, home improvement, and agriculture loans. To be eligible to apply, a person must reside within the 10 1/2-county service area of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and must possess a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) from a federally recognized tribe. For more information, please contact Susan Edwards at 580.924.8280 or toll-free 800.522.6170.

If you are interested in applying for a loan from the SOICA or the Choctaw Revolving Loan Fund, there will be a representative from the Choctaw Nation Credit Department at the:

Poteau Family Investment Center • March 27, 2015

and

Wright City Community Center • April 10, 2015

at

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.

HEALTH

Choctaw Nation's Day of the Young Child

By KELLI OSTMAN

Choctaw Nation

In recognition of the national Week of the Child, the Choctaw Nation Tribal Early Learning Initiative (TELI) will host its 3rd annual training with the focus on autism awareness, April 17. The Choctaw people have always celebrated children. Our heritage has long valued the importance of raising children to respect others, work hard, and strive to achieve their dreams. We believe in our children and their abilities to succeed, beginning at the youngest of ages and will do all we can to support their development and success in life.

TELI is a federal initiative to improve collaboration efforts between Head Start, Child Care, Child Care Assistance, Early Head Start Partnership, and tribal maternal, infant and early childhood home visiting grantees. To qualify for TELI funding made available through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Department of Health and Human Services, a tribe must be receiving federal funds for each of the five collaborating programs and be willing to develop a strong collaboration in early childhood services and to developing a more comprehensive wrap-around servicing for

Choctaw families.

This year, the Choctaw TELI collaboration will lead to the signing of a formal memorandum of understanding between our TELI partners and the new Early Head Start-Child Care Program. We will host community awareness trainings on autism with all TELI partners including professional staff development and parent awareness trainings for parents receiving Choctaw Nation services at 21 sites. All of these autism community awareness meetings will be held within the Choctaw Nation during the month of April 2015. The TELI Initiative will also be developing unified application, release of information, and referral forms for all of the services in the Choctaw Nation that are in partnership with the Early Childhood System of Care Programs or TELI Initiative. This will allow our programs to provide comprehensive quality care to families of young children focusing on parenting education, family health and wellness, proper early childhood development, and numerous other areas that work hand-in-hand to best support families with young children.

The Choctaw Nation is excited about this opportunity to declare April 17 as a day to focus on the young children. We must also be aware of the debt of gratitude we owe the parents and staff who support early childhood programs. With selfless dedication they work together to advance progress for our families and children.

There are many challenges but there are also countless opportunities to positively impact children's lives and working together we make a greater difference!

As part of the TELI collaboration, Choctaw Nation is also pleased to announce the newest initiative, Autism Community CARES. "The goal of this initiative is to connect the autism community with the Choctaw Nation," states Rebecca Hawkins, Senior Director. "There is a lack of education, support, advocacy, and awareness within the Choctaw Nation. We are stepping up to take the lead in this area by partnering with local and state agencies to provide these services within Southeast Oklahoma." Autism Community CARES advisory board is comprised of licensed professionals, tribal representatives, educators, and family members living with autism spectrum disorders. Currently, resource and training events open to professionals and families are being organized throughout the area. Rebecca goes on to say, "We are coordinating these events to bring education and support to our families. Our professional resource team will be on hand at these events to meet with family members and assist with locating resources."

For more information on the autism initiative and upcoming events, visit: autismcommunitycares.com. You may also contact Rebecca Hawkins at 800.522.6170, ext. 2438, or Kelli Ostman at 866.933.2260.

NURSERY NEWS

Hudson David Bishop

Proud parents Dennis and Kathryn Bishop are happy to announce the arrival of their son, Hudson David Bishop. Hudson was born May 31, 2014, at Arlington Memorial Hospital in Arlington, Texas,



weighing in at 8 pounds, 4 ounces and 19 3/4 inches long. Proud grandparents are Jerry and Wanda Williams of Oklahoma, Denny Bishop of Texas, David and Kristie Trimble of Florida, and great-grandma Mary Trimble of Florida.

Gentry Rhae Buckner

Justin and Katie Buckner of McAlester are the proud parents of a baby girl born Dec. 3, 2014, at the Talihina Hospital. Gentry Rhae weighed in at 6 pounds 13.6 ounces and was 18.3 inches long.



Proud grandparents are James and Angie Buckner of Savanna, and Lindsey and Julie Grant of McAlester. Great-grandparents are Lois and the late Thomas Buckner, Pam and the late Mendy Mendenhall, and Kenneth and Linda Sherrill.

Sawyer Wayne Spears

Sawyer Wayne Spears was born on Dec. 22, 2014, weighing 8 pounds 5 ounces and measuring 20 3/8 inches long.



He is the son of proud parents Brad and Danielle Spears of Hartshorne.

He is the grandson of Clyde and Alice Ann Spears of Gowen, Rhonda Willmott of Damon Valley, and Carl and Kelly Willmott of Michigan.

He is the great-grandson of the late Earl and Francis Spears; Mary Alice and the late Joe Benedict; Barbara Parker and the late Carl Willmott, Sr.; and James and the late Juanita Harvey Sturges.

Brad and Danielle would like to express their appreciation to the Talihina Hospital staff for their dedicated service, thoughtfulness, and excellent care.

Tucker Brian Beaty

Tucker Brian Beaty was born Jan. 9, 2015, at 2:01 a.m. at the Claremore Indian Hospital in Claremore. He was 6 pounds 1 ounce and 19 inches long.



The proud parents are Kayanna and Justin Beaty. Maternal grandparents are Walter Luckinbill and Billie Nygard. And paternal grandparents are Tammie and Brian Beaty.

Jemma Julianna Puckette

Michael and Kerry Puckette would like to announce the arrival of Jemma Julianna Puckette. Jemma was born 6:34 p.m. Jan. 18, 2015, in New London, Connecticut. She was 6 pounds 13 ounces, and 19 inches long.



She is the granddaughter of Thomas and Debby Puckette of Longview, Texas, and Thomas and Ruth Stone of Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Jemma is the great-granddaughter of Calvin and Jerry Beames of Kingston, J. Charlene Beames of Ardmore, and the late Charles and Oneta Puckette of Poteau.

Rachel ReNee Young

Rachel ReNee Young was born Feb. 11, 2015, at 5:55 a.m. at Durant MCSO Women's Center. She was 8 pounds 6 ounces and 19 1/2 inches long.



Her mom is Shawn DeNell Young (CNO Learning & Development) and her dad is Adam Young.

Grandparents are Lavon and Johnny Speers of Durant and Michael and Traci Young of Milburn.

Rachel had a head full of black hair and momma's good looks!

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

WAREHOUSES & MARKETS

Antlers: 306 S.W. "O" St., (580) 298-6443
Durant: 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., (580) 924-7773
McAlester: 1212 S. Main St., (918) 420-5716
Poteau: 100 Kerr Ave., (918) 649-0431

FOOD DISTRIBUTION SITES

Bethel: Choctaw Community Center
Broken Bow: Choctaw Community Center
Idabel: Choctaw Community Center
Smithville: Choctaw Community Center

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). For any other information dealing with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) issues, persons should either contact the USDA SNAP Hotline Number at (800) 221-5689, which is also in Spanish or call the State Information/Hotline Numbers (click the link for a listing of hotline numbers by State); found online at http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/contact_info/hotlines.htm.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

*** NEW HOURS ***

Open 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday;
 10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Thursday

ANTLERS

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
April 1: Idabel 9-11:30 a.m.; Broken Bow 1:30-3:30 p.m. (market open)
April 8: Bethel 9-10:30; Smithville 12-2 (market open)
Closed: April 3 for holiday; April 28-30 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: April 13, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

DURANT

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
Closed: April 3 for holiday; April 28-30 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: April 9, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

MCALESTER

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
Closed: April 3 for holiday; April 28-30 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: April 7, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

POTEAU

Market open weekdays April 1-30, except for:
Closed: April 3 for holiday; April 28-30 for inventory.
Cooking with Carmen: April 2, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Farmers Market Nutrition Program for Seniors

The Choctaw Nation Community Centers will be taking applications for the FMNP for Seniors **through March**. If you received checks last year, you will be mailed an application and you may mail it back in or take it to your community center worker and they will mail it for you.

If you receive an application in the mail, please do not fill out another application at the community building.

The guidelines are the same as last year:

1. Meet income requirements (show proof)
2. Choctaw at least 60 years of age (Choctaw CDIB)
3. Disabled persons age 55 and older (show proof)
4. Show proof of residence

Ten checks in \$5.00 increments (the equivalent of \$50.00) will be mailed to qualifying seniors starting in April. The dates for use of the checks will be May 1 to Oct. 31, 2015. The Farmers Market would like to sign farmers for Choctaw Nation to accept the checks from the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program participants and the Farmers Market Nutrition Program for Seniors participants.

For more information, please contact:
 Peggy Carlton
 FMNP for Seniors Coordinator
 800-522-6170 x2303

Choctaw Nation Breastfeeding Classes

Come join us for a breastfeeding class in your area!

Many mothers want to learn more about breastfeeding so that they can feel more confident in their decision to breastfeed.

This breastfeeding class will address the following topics:

- *latch
- *positioning
- *frequency of feedings
- *growth spurts
- *breastfeeding resources

DURANT

April 8, June 10, August 12, October 14
 1:00 - 3:00 pm
 Choctaw Nation WIC Office

TALIHINA

April 1, June 3, August 5, October 7
 9:00 - 11:00 am
 Choctaw Nation DWIC

POTEAU

March 4, May 6, September 2, November 4
 9:00 - 11:00 am
 Rubin White Health Clinic
 Conference Room

IDABEL

April 15, June 17, August 19, October 21
 9:00 - 11:00 am
 Choctaw Nation Clinic
 Education Room

MCALESTER

March 11, May 13, July 8, September 9, November 18
 1:00 - 3:00 pm
 Choctaw Nation Health Clinic
 Deansstairs Conference Room

Sponsored by Choctaw Nation WIC
 For more information, or for breastfeeding help, please call Erin James, IBCLC 1-800-522-6170 extension 2307

Choctaw Nation WIC WOMEN, INFANTS and CHILDREN



Site	Hours	Days
Antlers (580) 298-3161	8:30-4:00	Every Tues.
Atoka (580) 889-5825	8:00-4:30	Every Mon., Wed., Thur., & Fri.
Bethel (580) 241-5458	8:30-4:00	1st Tues.
Boswell (580) 380-5264	8:30-4:00	Every Fri.
Broken Bow (580) 584-2746	8:00-4:30	Daily, except 1st Tues. & 2nd Thurs
Coalgate (580) 927-3641	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.
Durant (580) 924-8280 x 2257	8:00-4:30	Daily
Hugo (580) 326-5404	8:00-4:30	Daily
Idabel (580) 286-2510	8:00-4:30	Mon., Thur., & Fri.
McAlester (918) 423-6335	8:00-4:30	Daily
Poteau (918) 647-4585	8:00-4:30	Daily
Smithville (580) 244-3289	8:30-4:00	2nd Thur.
Spiro (918) 962-3832	8:00-4:30	Every Wed.-Fri.
Stigler (918) 967-4211	8:30-4:00	Every Mon.-Wed.
Talihina (918) 567-7000 x 6792	8:00-4:30	Mon., Tues., Wed., & Fri.
Wilburton (918) 465-5641	8:30-4:00	Every Thur.



Success Through Academic Recognition

Success Through Academic Recognition (STAR) began in 2007 under the leadership of Chief Gregory E. Pyle with his vision of providing educational opportunities to our Choctaw youth. I intend to carry on his legacy by continuing to invest in our students worldwide. People, particularly our children, are the future of our tribe, and as such, we are fostering a desire to accomplish academic and lifelong goals. By providing monetary incentives for academic achievements, STAR encourages Choctaw students to make education a priority, which leads to improved lives for all Choctaw tribal members. STAR aims to develop student work ethic, improve graduation rates, and to reveal opportunities for continued education after high school. As a gateway to other Choctaw Nation programs, STAR provides the foundation for students to connect with their heritage by taking advantage of the many opportunities available to our tribal members. Education has played a vital role in the growth of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and because of programs like STAR, the future remains bright and full of hope for the Choctaw people.

Gary Batton
 Chief of the Choctaw Nation



Phone: (800) 522-6170, ext. 2573
 Fax: (580) 916-3813
 E-mail: star@choctawnation.com
 On the web: star.choctawnation.com

NOTES TO THE NATION

Thank you from a livestock show champ

I just wanted to say thank you for all you have done for me. You have always supported me at sales and shows. I just recently won the Choctaw Nation Livestock Show.

Taylor McGill

Gratitude from Calera

Thanks so much for the donation of welcome bags for the Christmas boxes for our church and the opportunity to invest in the lives of others. No goods or services were received in exchange for this gift. Thanks again!

Jacob Towes, Pastor, and the members of the First Baptist Church of Calera

Reunion for Kemp family

A family reunion for descendants of Stanton Kemp, original enrollee of the Choctaw Nation, will be held July 11, 2015 at 10 a.m. at the Choctaw Community Center in McAlester, located at 1632 S. George Nigh Expressway, next door to the Choctaw Casino. There will be a potluck luncheon. Everyone please bring your favorite covered dish. If anyone has pictures to share, please bring them. Contact Joyce Kemp-Vaughn by email, joyevaughn@yahoo.com with questions or for more information.

Joyce Kemp-Vaughn

Thanks from Cypress, Texas

I would like to thank the Nation for their help in my getting hearing aids recently. It is quite a drive from Houston to the clinic in Oklahoma, but it was worth it.

As we get older, those little things like hearing and eye sight fail us on occasion. One never knows how valuable hearing is until it begins to wane.

As a geography teacher, hundreds of students are now aware of the Choctaw Nation that would have otherwise never heard of us. I try to integrate our history relevant to what we study in various topics. U. S. History classes only teach the trail of Cherokee tears. Students are now aware that many more tribes were involved, especially Choctaws, and we are a growing and vibrant tribe. Thanks for all you do.

Rusty Sandefur

A roof over my head

With grateful appreciation I write this letter to thank the following for help in getting a new roof on my home. First of all, I want to thank the Lord. Then the Choctaw Nation Housing Authority, my councilman Thomas Williston, Zack Belvin, and the Tribesman Construction crew. Mr. Belvin's crew had the new roof on quicker than I ever thought possible. It's so nice to not have to worry about the rain. Thank you again.

Mavis Bastible

Youth of the Nation

Breanna Lambert, YAB member

My name is Breanna Lambert. I am fifteen years old, and I attend Savanna High School. I have recently joined and been involved with the Youth Advisory Board of the Choctaw Nation.

A couple of the more recent events we have done were to visit a nursing home and sing Christmas Carols and visit with the residents. Also we handed toys out to children at a youth Christmas party.

These are just a few of the topics I feel are important to address: domestic violence, drug abuse, and also child abuse or neglect.

Domestic violence and child abuse are both topics that really hit home for many people, including myself. I have seen many people who suffer from this and feel there is no way out or that there is no hope for a better life. We the people need to stand up and show that there is hope for a better future for anyone who will ask for help.

Also, I feel it is important child abuse is recognized since on average over three million child abuse reports are reported each year. With child abuse awareness we could minimize these numbers.

YAB is an organization that helps provide awareness for causes such as these.

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin Jr.
Assistant Chief



Judy Allen, Senior Executive Officer
Lisa Reed, Executive Director
Vonna Shults, Media Director
Ronni Pierce, Editor
Zach Maxwell, Reporter/Photographer
Brandon Frye, Reporter/Photographer
Payton Guthrie, Social Media Coordinator

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The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal Members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for 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 or 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.

If you are receiving more than one BISKINIK at your home or if your address needs changed, we would appreciate hearing from you.

The BISKINIK is a nonprofit publication of the Choctaw Nation.

Circulation is monthly. Article deadline is the 10th of the month for the following month's edition.

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.



Proud to be a Choctaw

I wanted to thank you for all the help you have given my little family. I was living in a brick home with no water heater and no insulation. Ms. Tad Rodriguez came to my house and arranged for the repairs, and the house is so much more comfortable. And how nice to have hot water! It's a luxury to me that I just am so happy with.

You have also helped two of my sons through school and I want to thank you for that. Debbie in higher education has always been so helpful and wonderful to us. My oldest son Alex Keeling graduated in December from UNLV with a degree in fine arts/graphic design and already has a job working for the federal government in Nevada. My second son Nick Keeling will graduate in May, also from UNLV, and he will have his degree in English. We could not have done this without the help of Choctaw Nation. My paternal great-great-grandparents, the Choates, walked the Trail of Tears and ended up here in Stuart, a town established and donated by my great-great-grandfather Sam Wooley. I live on the same hill as my ancestors, and I am so proud to be Choctaw and be a Wooley. I walk outside every day and look into the valley, and I think of how my ancestors lived and the pain they suffered. I think of how proud they would be of my boys, and I am filled with gratitude to be a member of this great tribe, the Choctaw Nation. Thank you so very much for the help and the kindnesses you have shown us.

Luann Wooley
Descendant of David Choate and OK-LA-FAY -LA-A,
parents of James C. Choate and Winnie Ward

EVENTS

Wheelock Alumni Reunion

Will be held on Friday, May 22, 2015
Calling all Wheelock Academy alumni and family members:
We need your updated contact information and mailing addresses!
To receive invitations and future updates about Wheelock Academy and Museum, please call:
580 746 2139
or email
Wanda Howard (whoward@choctawnation.com)
Dawn Standridge (dstandridge@choctawnation.com)
Yakoke!

Choctaw Nation HSE/GED Classes

Distance Learning GED classes are now available at the above locations. An experienced GED teacher will instruct you, using Distance Learning Technology. Distance Learning allows the student and teacher to see and hear each other on large monitors. You will be able to interact with the teacher as she prepares you to take the GED test. In addition, a \$10-per-day attendance stipend will be paid to those who attend classes on a regular basis and attempt the HSE/GED test. Classes meet three days each week for approximately nine weeks. Books, supplies and testing fees are provided. If you have turned in an application with our Adult Education Program for HSE/GED classes and wish to attend the upcoming class, please contact our office. If you have not applied and wish to attend these or future classes, please contact Kathy Bench at the Durant office, 800-522-6170, ext. 2122. A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) is required.

Beginning date for all classes is March 9, 2015.

Atoka County Atoka Monday, 1:00pm – 4:00pm Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.	McCurtain County Bethel Monday, 9:00am – 12:00pm Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.
Coal County Coalgate Monday, 1:00pm – 4:00pm Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.	Smithville Monday, 9:00am – 12:00pm Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.
Leflore County Talihina Monday, 1:00pm – 4:00pm Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.	Wright City Monday, 9:00am – 12:00pm Choctaw Nation Community Cntr.

Choctaw Royalty
District Princess Pageants are Coming Soon!
Information packets available at local Choctaw Nation field offices now.
For more information please contact your local field office or the Cultural Services Department at 1-800-522-6170, Ext. 2377

Frazier Memorial Gospel Singing

March 27, 2015, 6:30 p.m.
Choctaw Nation Community Center
707 Bond Street in Crowder MC, Luther John
Special Guest, ReDefined
Concessions available.
Everyone Welcome!

District 11 Councilman Bob Pate's Birthday Bash
McAlester Expo
April 23
6 p.m.

Annual Benefit Wild Onion Supper & Gospel Singing

March 27, 2015
Sulphur Springs United Methodist Church
3 miles south of Bennington on Jennings Road

Supper: 5:30 p.m.
Singing: 7 p.m.

Wild onions with all the trimmings!\$6

For more information contact, Lorene Blaine (580) 924-9411.

→ 2015 Bow Shoot Schedule ←
Tuskahoma Capitol Grounds

April 11 • May 9 • June 13 • July 11 • Aug. 8 • Oct. 10
Registration, 10:30 Competition, 11:00

Long Bow → Recurve Bow → Selfbows → Handmade Bows
No compound bows

Age groups: 5 & under co-ed; 6-8 co-ed; 9-13 co-ed; 14-16 boys & girls; 17-19 boys & girls; 20 & over men & women

Special Events: Sept. 6, Labor Day Festival, 8 a.m. & Turkey Shoot, Nov. 14

Prizes for each age group at end of each shoot
Final prize awarded at end of year for overall points

Information, please call
Sue Folsom (800) 522-6170x2134 or
Pam Waugh (580) 775-7862.

Beginning Choctaw Language Class in Del City

Starting Thursday, March 26, 6 to 8 p.m.
Mary Lee Clark United Methodist Church
1100 Howard Drive, Del City, OK

Come learn the language of your 'pokni' (grandmother), with teacher Alice Taylor.

If you need further information call:

School of Choctaw Language (800) 522-6170 ext. 2102.

Offered by the School of Choctaw Nation Language Dept.

Horn Family 36th Annual Gospel Singing

March 28, 2015
7:30 p.m.

Chickasaw Community Center
1203 W. Raybranam
Tishomingo, OK

All singers and listeners welcome.

Concessions will be available.
Bring your lawn chairs, limited seating.

Hampton Chapel Annual Singing

Saturday, March 21
Hampton Chapel located 3 miles east of Spencerville
Wild Onion Supper starts at 5 p.m. Singing starts at 7 p.m.
MC: Floyd Peters
For more information, call Anthony Thompson (817) 715-9827 or call (580) 326-4961 or (580) 372-0755.

Everyone is invited!

3rd Annual Arrowhead Pow Wow

March 21
Southeast Expo Center
4500 W. Hwy. 270
McAlester, OK

Head Staff

MC: Albert Old Crow Head Man Fancy: TBA
AD: Bill Takes Horse Head Lady: Mika Whitecloud
Head Singer: Lloyd Guinn Head Gourd Dancer: Joe Bohanon
Color Guard: Choctaw Nation

Arrowhead Pow Wow Princess: Baylee Byington

Demonstrations

Basket making, beading, and pottery: 2:30 - 6pm
Twrnp Issuba (War Horse) Youth Stickball Demonstration: 4:30pm
Chris Jacobs/Choctaw Dancing Demonstration: 5:30pm

Registration: All ages, closes at 6 p.m.; All contestants must be in Grand Entry
Gourd Dance: 2:30 - 5:30pm Grand Entry: 6:30pm

Sponsored Contests

Fancy/Grass Traditional/Straight
Fancy Shawl/Jingle Buckskin/Cloth
Tiny Tots, 6 years and under

Craft Booths, \$50 per table

For more information, contact Dena Cantrell (918) 423-1016 or (918) 421-0368 or denac@choctawnation.com
Indian tacos by the Arrowhead Pow Wow Committee and Expo will be only concessions. All princesses welcome!
No drugs or alcohol allowed.

CHOCTAW NATION of OKLAHOMA
Student School and Activity Fund
PROVIDES A YEARLY DONATION OF
\$100
THE FUNDS CAN BE USED FOR OBTAINING
SCHOOL CLOTHING, SCHOOL SUPPLIES
OR ACTIVITIES EQUIPMENT.

STUDENT ELIGIBILITY:
★ CHOCTAW TRIBAL MEMBER
★ ENROLLED IN HEAD START — 12TH GRADE
★ PARENTS MUST SUBMIT AN APPLICATION, COPY OF STUDENT'S MEMBERSHIP CARD AND SOCIAL SECURITY CARD EACH FUNDING CYCLE.
→ DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 30TH ←

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL
(800) 522-6170
PO BOX 1210 | DURANT, OK 74705

COLLEGE CLOTHING ALLOWANCE
FOR MORE INFORMATION
CALL (800) 522-6170

OBITUARIES

JoAnn (Fobb) Frank

JoAnn Frank passed away peacefully at her home in Terrell, Texas on Nov. 2, 2014.

She was born on Nov. 9, 1947 to Joe and Minerva Fobb. She attended Bennington School and after graduation she attended Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kan. where she took business courses. It was there that she met Austin Frank and they were married in 1969.

They began their married life in Dallas where JoAnn worked as a legal secretary until her retirement. In 1984 they moved to Mesquite, Texas where she continued to raise her family by setting an example of a devoted wife and mother. Austin and JoAnn later settled in Terrell, Texas to be close to her children and grandchildren. They became active members of the First Baptist Church and served in different ministries of the church.

JoAnn was preceded in death by her parents and siblings, Arnold Bully, Claude Billy and Charles Joseph Fobb.

She is survived by her husband of more than 45 years, Austin Frank of Terrell, Texas; children, Kim Abbott and husband Stephen of Mabank, Texas, Stephanie Rodriguez and husband Jaime of Rockwell, Texas, Kevin Frank and wife Katrina of Heartland, Texas and Lori Carter and husband Jeff of Mesquite, Texas; 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild; her sisters, Bernice Williams and husband Olin of Bennington, LouElla Fobb of White Oak, Texas; her step-sisters and brother, Verna Peters of Pampa, Texas, Eleanor Palmer and husband Edward of Durant and James Pamplin of Fort Worth, Texas; as well as several nieces, nephews, extended family members and many friends who will miss her dearly.

Don William Cochneuer

Don William Cochneuer passed away on Dec. 8, 2014. He was 85. He was born on June 24, 1929 in Fairfax to the late Marion and Jessie Cochneuer. He graduated from Modesto (Calif.) High School where he met and then married the love of his life, Wanda May Harkrader. He worked for the Modesto State Hospital as a Senior Psychiatric Tech I then transferred to Ukiah, Calif. and later Porterville, Calif., where he lived out his life.

Don is survived by his loving wife, Wanda May; daughters, Wandenna and Donna; six grandchildren: Jeanna Cochneuer, Erik Van Fleet, William Van Fleet, Shawn Caudill, Arron Caudill and Justin Caudill; 13 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren; and two brothers, Doug and Lew.

Ruby Pauline 'Granny' Davis

Ruby Pauline "Granny" Davis, 89, passed away on Jan. 14, 2015 in Del City. She was born on July 26, 1925 in Ringling to Ernest and Ola (Buba) Forsythe. She enjoyed fishing, cooking, dancing, and spending time with her precious grandchildren and family.

Pauline was preceded in death by her parents; sister, Virginia McLane; brothers, E.J., Jim and Lawrence; husbands, Sammy Owens and Cotton Davis; sons-in-law, Jim Wagner, Leon Wagner and Paul Ring; grandsons, Robert Wagner and Jeremy Wade Ring.

She is survived by her four daughters, Adolia Jean Wagner, Sammie Kay Privotte, Lynda Sue Johnson and husband Howard, Anna Juanita Ring; 12 grandchildren; and numerous great-grandchildren.

Shirley Dean Parker

Shirley Dean Parker went to be with her Lord on Jan. 16, 2015 at the age of 71.

She was born Sept. 11, 1943 in Tishomingo to Dossie Lewis and Edna Sweet. She was the youngest of three girls. Shirley married Ralph Gene Parker at the young age of 13. Shortly after that they started their family in Balch Springs, Texas. Together they had five children. Shirley also raised her granddaughter Michelle, as her own.

Shirley loved gardening, crafting, attending kids and grandkids sporting events, and cooking enough food to feed an army. Later in life she loved spending her days with her great-granddaughter Kaelynn, chatting with old friends on Facebook, and spending hours on Pinterest. Shirley found joy in the little things, like sitting on her porch listening to wind chimes. She was a homebody, but loved going out for "mani/pedis" and lunch with her granddaughters.

She also spent time caring for her elderly uncle, John B, who preceded her in death. Shirley was also preceded in death by her parents, loving husband Ralph Gene Parker, son Ricky Parker and sister Barbara Lewis.

She is survived by four children Gene Parker, Jr. and wife Carol, Lisa Parker Martin and husband George, Treisa Parker and Gary Parker and friend Lisa Baker; grandchildren Brock Parker, Josh Martin, Aime Martin Hadnot, Laci Parker Spencer, Misty Cozart Evans and Michelle Rorie; 18 great-grandchildren; sister Dianna Lewis and numerous nieces and nephews.

David 'Dee' Van Johnson

David "Dee" Van Johnson passed away peacefully on Jan. 22, 2015 in Modesto, Calif., at the age of 92. Dee was born on Dec. 22, 1922 in Tamaha to Emmitt and Ola Johnson. He has been a resident of Stanislaus County, Calif., for the past 69 years.

Dee proudly served in the US Army during World War II in the European Theater as a surgical technician. After leaving the Army, Dee worked for a number of years in construction before working for Modesto Irrigation District for 33 years in the maintenance department. Dee loved to duck hunt and go fishing at Don Pedro. He had a love for horses, hummingbirds and motorcycles and was an avid San Francisco Giants and 49er fan. He also enjoyed playing dominos and watching westerns. He was a wonderful and faithful husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather that will be deeply missed and never forgotten.

Dee leaves behind the love of his life, his wife, Virginia Lillian Johnson; his daughter, Sylvia Gail Solansky and husband Rickey Lee; his granddaughter, Brenda Dee Johnson and husband James; his great-granddaughter, Cheri LeAnn Johnson; and his siblings, Gayle Edward Johnson, Jerry Wayne Johnson, and Rena Belle Foster.

Dee is preceded in death by his parents and three siblings. Arrangements have been entrusted to Franklin & Downs Funeral Home. A committal service was held at Ceres Memorial Park in Modesto, Calif.



Alfred Harley

Alfred Harley, 83, of Wilburton, passed away Jan. 20, 2015, at his residence.

Alfred was born in Idabel on Oct. 20, 1931, a son of the late Lena (Battice) and Leo Harley.

He worked as an auto mechanic. He was a member of Grace Indian Methodist Church in Hartshorne. He served in the U.S. Army.

Alfred is survived by: Five daughters, Janet, wife of Paul Massey, of Talihina, Sharon Crank, of Talihina, Alfreda Harley, of Idabel, Deborah, wife of Jimmy Wesley, of Wright City, Leslie Harley of Wilburton; three sons: Gary Harley of Wilburton, Alfred Harley, Jr., of Okmulgee, James Douglas, husband of Tamara Harley, of Wilburton; Alfred is also survived by three sisters, Ruthie Mae Williston of Idabel, Faye Stehle of Fort Worth, Amelia Harley of Idabel; two brothers, Everett Harley of Idabel and Virgil Harley of DeQueen, Arkansas; he is also survived by Special Friend, Jean Thomas of Talihina; 17 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his parents, two brothers and two sisters.

Graveside service was held at Choctaw Veterans Cemetery, Tvshka Homma, with Rev. David Warden officiating.



Christopher Wayne Newton

Christopher Wayne Newton was born on Nov. 16, 1989 to Kenneth Palmer and Janet Renae Newton in Shawnee. Christopher went home to be with his Lord and Savior on Jan. 12, 2015 in Durant, at the age of 25 years, 1 month and 27 days.

Christopher came to Bryan County in 2003 from Kiowa and working in the oil field was his favorite job. Christopher attended 7th and Beech Church of Christ and enjoyed fishing, skateboarding, listening to music, and was always joking with family and friends. Christopher loved his favorite sports teams the Boston Red Sox and the New England Patriots. He will be greatly missed by all that knew and loved him.

Christopher is preceded in death by his aunts, Gooben Stiles, Euna Sweetin; uncle, Harland Stiles; great-grandparents, Ben and Francine Sweetin, Ran and Orvilla Newton; cousin, Tresea Shields.

Christopher is survived by his loving mother and father Janet Renae Newton of Calera, Kenneth Palmer of Shawnee; sister, Monica Griffis of Calera; brother, Tyler Palmer of Shawnee; uncle, Johnny Newton and wife Waleeta of Elk City; grandparents, Jan and Faye Newton of Durant, Lonnie Palmer and Kathy Palmer of Shawnee; along with numerous close cousins and other loving family and friends.

Interment was at Pittsburg Cemetery in Pittsburg.

Elsie Precise Brantley

Elsie Precise Brantley was born on March 10, 1919 in Nelson, Okla. and passed away on Jan. 26, 2015 in Dallas, Texas.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Elmer R. Brantley.

Elsie is survived by her son, Huey Precise and wife, Judy of Dallas; daughter, Betty Bratcher and husband, Keith of Frisco, Texas; sister, Vadie Arrington of Longview, Texas; grandchildren, Chad Wood and wife, Nicole, Laura Precise Ferris and husband, John, and Michael Precise and wife, Tammy; great-grandchildren, Isabella Wood, Rhys Ferris, Carson Ferris and Keenan Precise; and two great-great-grandchildren.

A graveside service was held for Elsie on Jan. 29, 2015 at Restland Memorial Park, Dallas.

Sidney Paul 'Sid' Spencer

Sidney Paul "Sid" Spencer of Heavener was born Jan. 30, 1956 in Levelland, Texas to Sherman and Nellie (Pigg) Spencer and passed away Dec. 30, 2014 in Sallisaw at the age of 58.

He is survived by: his wife Leah of the home; one daughter, Amanda Arnett and husband Bret of Broken Arrow; two sons, Caleab Spencer and wife Kimberly of Newmarket, New Hampshire and Wade Spencer and wife Sydnee of Lawton; sisters, Rhonda Kurvink and Kim Kurvink of McAlester, Nancy Spencer of Tishomingo; two grandchildren, Ava Arnett and Jaiden Graham; mother-in-law, Ina Ruth Vaughn of Wister; numerous other relatives and a host of many friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Sid was a long-time resident of Heavener and a Registered Nurse for nearly 20 years at the Choctaw Nation Indian Hospital in Talihina. He was an avid sportsman who loved to fish and hunt.

Cremation arrangements are under the direction of Dowden-Roberts Funeral Home of Heavener.

In lieu of flowers the family request the memorials be made to one of the following organizations in Sid's honor: C.A.S.T. www.castforkids.org, Robber's Cave State Park children's fishing programs, or Future Fisherman Organization of America.

Gussie L. (Gardner) Strong

Gussie L. (Gardner) Strong was born Jan. 25, 1945 to Lula Beatrice and Henderson E. Gardner in Bokchito. She passed away Jan. 26, 2015 in Durant.

Gussie was raised in the Blue Branch community with her nine siblings. She accepted Christ early in life and united with the Arnetta Baptist Church in that community, serving in many ministries of the church until she moved away.

Gussie attended and graduated from Bokchito High School. After graduation she moved to Lawrence, Kansas, where she met and married David Strong.

Because she loved the Lord and knew she needed a church home, she united with the 9th Street Baptist Church in Lawrence where she was very active. After her husband passed away, she moved back to Bokchito to be near her family.

Gussie was known for her delicious cooking, which was one of her many hobbies. In addition to cooking she loved to sew and decorate.

Her beautiful smile captured the hearts of all who knew her. She touched the lives of many people and even during her illness, Gussie was still encouraging those around her. Politeness was another one of her loving and special characteristics and her presence here on earth will be missed by her family and friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents; her husband; two brothers, Jerry Joe and Rodger Lavern Gardner; and one sister, Juanita Gardner.

Gussie is survived by three brothers: Oscar L. Gardner of Kansas City, Mo., Rev. Earnest Gardner of Baton Rouge, La. and Henderson Gardner Jr. of Muskogee; three sisters, Era Bell Gardner of Aurora, Colo., Carlene G. Gardner and Maude E. Gardner of Bokchito; and a host of other relatives and friends.

Interment was held in Blue Branch Cemetery in Bokchito.

Rommie Ralph LeFlore

Rommie Ralph LeFlore, 80, of Vian, passed away on Jan. 29, 2015 in Vian. He was born April 20, 1934 in Massey to Carl and Helen (Bristow) LeFlore.

Rommie was raised in the Kiamichi Mountains. He graduated from Wilburton High School in 1951. He attended Oklahoma Eastern A&M College in Wilburton from 1951-53, then continued his education at OSU in Stillwater, graduating in 1955. He entered the U.S. Army and served overseas in the 8th Division until he was discharged in 1957. On March 27, 1958 he married Betty (Lucas) LeFlore in McAlester.

Rommie was a vocational agriculture instructor for 28 years. His career began in Hartselle, Ala., and ended in Vian. He retired in 1985 and spent his remaining years ranching and training horses.

Rommie was a member of Blackgum First Baptist Church where he supported and assisted with the Men's Breakfast for many years.

Survivors include wife Betty of the home; two daughters and sons-in-law, Michael and Bill Cole of Purcell and DeShonne and Ed Haworth of Tahlequah; two sons, Dirk LeFlore of Atlanta and Rafe LeFlore of Blackgum; eight grandchildren, Seth, Sean, Lydia and Alex Cole, Bracie and Hannah Haworth and LaKeesha and Kyndal LeFlore; one brother, Garry LeFlore of Tyler, Texas; and many nieces, nephews and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents.

Ira Jean Pebworth Evans

Ira Jean Pebworth Evans, 91, of Wilburton, passed away Dec. 1, 2014, at Select Specialty Hospital in Fort Smith, Ark.

Ira was born in Coalgate on Nov. 29, 1923, a daughter of the late Vera (Locke) Pebworth and Preston Pebworth.

Ira was a homemaker, data processor and keyboard operator and was of the Baptist faith.

Ira is survived by two daughters, Betty Jean Armstrong, of Wilburton and Patty Brown (and husband James Brown) of Tyler, Texas; a son, David Burleson, of Oregon; two sisters, June Greenwood, of Ada, and Opal Dean Pebworth, of Florida; she is also survived by six grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, one great-great-grandchild.

She was preceded in death by her parents, husband, five brothers and six sisters.

Addison Renita Mae Maxey

Addison Renita Mae Maxey, of Purcell, was born on Feb. 3, 2015, to Darrell Neil and Ashley Megan (Yates) Maxey, at Oklahoma City. Addison passed away on Feb. 3, 2015 at Oklahoma City.

Addison is survived by her parents, Darrell and Ashley Megan (Yates) Maxey of Purcell; brother, Carter Maxey of Purcell; sister, Jaycee Maxey of Purcell; grandmother, Susan James-Welch and husband Matt of Farris; grandfather, Terry Yates of Talihina; great-grandmothers, Wanda Maxey of Talihina, Lillie James and husband Paul of Farris; great-grandparents, George Yates and husband Leon, of Lane, Don Wallace and wife Faye of Atoka; uncles, Brandon Yates of Talihina, D.J. Maxey and wife Brandi of Talihina, Hovah Maxey and wife Carrie of Noble, Jerome Maxey of Lawton; along with cousins, other relatives and friends.

Addison was preceded in death by an uncle, Jay Yates; and grandparents, Darrell Sr. and Renita Maxey.

Interment was held at Butler Cemetery in Lane.

Bennie Lee Gibson

Bennie Lee Gibson passed away Feb. 5, 2015, in Norman. He was born on Oct. 11, 1923 in Hendrix to Jeff and Laura (Potters) Gibson. After attending Goodland Academy, Bennie joined the U.S. Army at age 16 (but said he was 18). He served in the Pacific during World War II. After an honorable discharge, he returned to Oklahoma and attended Southeastern State Teacher's College. This is where he met and married the love of his life, Edna Williams. After graduation, Bennie and Edna Gibson moved to Shiprock, New Mexico where they served for many years at schools on the Navajo Reservation and raised a family. Bennie was a beloved and respected educator who taught generations of students. To this day, people enjoy sharing their memories of Mr. Gibson.

Upon retirement, Bennie and Edna moved to Finley where they were active in their church, Old Cedar Methodist Church. When Edna was struck with long-term illness, he devoted himself to his wife's care until her death in 2000. Bennie delighted in his family, OU sports, and the Oklahoma City Thunder.

He is preceded in death by his parents, siblings, and wife, Edna Gibson.

He is survived by son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Karen Gibson; daughter and son-in-law, Karla and Gilbert Heritage; grandsons: Joshua, Justus, and Jesse Gibson; as well as many nieces, nephews, and other family.

Interment was at Finley Cemetery under the direction of Burkhart Funeral Service.

The family would like to express their gratitude to the staff at Rivermont Assisted Living Center and the hospice staff with Carter Healthcare.

Malvin James

Malvin James, 86 of Idabel (formerly of Paris, Texas) passed away on Feb. 7, 2015. He was born Aug. 7, 1928 in Kullituklo, Okla. to Samuel James and Flora Battiest-James.

He enlisted in the U.S. Army and was honorably discharged after three years of service. Malvin was a graduate of Eastern Oklahoma Agriculture and Mechanical College. He worked for many years in the auto repair industry.

Malvin is preceded in death by: his mother and father; one brother, Bill Stanford Willie; one sister, Geraldine Battiest; and two sons, Allen James and George James.

Those he leaves to cherish his memories include: five beautiful daughters, Joyce L. James of Idabel, Melvina J. Buckland of Siloam Springs, Ark., Joni Haddix and husband Vince of Idabel, Pamela Middleton and Keith, Polly Kerwin and husband George of Red Hill, Ala.; two loving sisters, Opal Bernice James of Denver, Colo. and Marjorie Pollard and husband Dale of Mesquite, Texas; six grandchildren, Leandea Kitchens, Jason and Bill Buckland, Robbie Bohanon, Alex and Woodrow Schrand; six great-grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.



OBITUARIES

Hildred Marlow

Hildred Marlow, 97, a lifetime Atoka resident, passed away on Feb. 5, 2015 at Midwest City.

She was born on March 19, 1917, to Lewis and Marie Victoria (Burgess) Armstrong, at Harmony.

Hildred worked at the Naval Ammunition Depot in McAlester during World War II as an inspector. She also worked at Atoka Memorial Hospital as a nurse for 30 years. She married Toy Marlow in 1931. Hildred was a member of Harmony Baptist Church.

She is survived by daughters, Joy Cochran and husband Marvin of Atoka, and Floy Crawford of Oklahoma City; grandchildren, Darrell Cochran and wife Marleah of Atoka, Brenda Brown and husband Dwight of Choctaw, Teresa Beaulieu of Edmond; great-grandchildren, Brad Cochran of Caddo, Tim Cochran of McAlester, Tonya Hice of Midwest City, Regina Caron of Midwest City, Kristie Myers of Edmond, Mika Beaulieu of Edmond, Dustin Beaulieu of Edmond, Shanna Phillips of Texas; and several great-great-grandchildren; brothers, Sherman Armstrong (since deceased) and wife Delloise of Lehigh, Virgal Armstrong and wife Marva of Marana, Arizona; sister, Opal Berci and husband Ivan of Ranch Cucamonga, Calif.

She was preceded in death by parents, Lewis and Marie Victoria (Burgess) Armstrong, husband Toy Marlow; brothers Edmond "Buck" Armstrong, William Armstrong, Aaron Armstrong, Fred Armstrong; sister, Janie Smith; great-grandchildren, Edgar Wayne Scarberry III and Jeremy Rodger Walker. Interment was in Green Meadows Cemetery, Atoka.



Bennie Ruth Page

Bennie Ruth Page, 87, passed away Feb. 14, 2015 in Marlow.

Bennie was born Aug. 13, 1927 in Marlow, to Henry and Lula (York) Hanks. Bennie lived in the Marlow area most of her life and attended Oak Grove and Marlow Schools. On Oct. 23, 1947, she married Bill Page in Wichita Falls, Texas. He preceded her in death on Aug. 7, 1996. Bennie was a homemaker and enjoyed sewing and crocheting. She loved music, singing and dancing, and could often be heard humming and whistling. Bennie was a member of the VFW Auxiliary, Rebekah's, and the Church of Christ.

Survivors include: two sons, Dewayne Page and wife Sharon, Dean Page, both of Duncan; two daughters, Doris Ruth Page, Diane Keeling, both of Duncan; nine grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren; sister, Josephine Shaw and husband Kenneth of Duncan; numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Bennie was also preceded in death by her parents; son, Curtis Page; daughter, Cecilia Fay Page; brother, Buck Hanks; sister, Hazel "Kaye" Horn; nephews, Cecil Hanks, Bobby Fulton, Darrell Fulton.

Burial was in the Marlow Cemetery.



Jean Blaylock

Jean Blaylock of McCurtain was born March 17, 1925, in Milton, Okla. to Elzy and Clara Lee (LeFlore) Tolbert and passed away Feb. 15, 2015, in Spiro at the age of 89.

She was a devoted wife and homemaker. She loved to raise flowers and make quilts.

She is survived by, one daughter, Diana Franklin and husband, Billy of Pocola; one son, Jimmy Blaylock and wife, Bonnie of McCurtain; one sister, Blanche Martin of Harrah; five grandchildren, Leisha Hall of Panama, Michael Blaylock and wife, Nelda of McCurtain, Laura Spath and husband, Mike of Spiro, Mark Blaylock and wife, Janna of Stigler, Tobey Blaylock and wife, Amber of Brooken Cove, Okla.; several great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Elzy and Clara Tolbert; her husband, Jim Blaylock; one daughter, Wilma Blaylock; two sons, Danny and Lanny Blaylock; one sister, Dean Fout; and two brothers, Charles and Daniel Tolbert.

Burial was in Milton Cemetery.



Dalton James

Dalton James, 76, of Broken Bow, passed away Feb. 15, 2015, at OSU-Medical Center in Tulsa. He was born May 2, 1938, in Broken Bow, the son of Rev. Isaac Dixon and Alice (Billy) James.

Dalton was a member of Yasho Methodist Church, where he was a Sunday School Superintendent. He was a fluent Choctaw speaker. He enjoyed playing the piano, growing plants, watching golf, and he loved spending time with his family. He also enjoyed reading the Bible and had accepted Christ as his Savior in 1981.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Neal James, Manuel James, and Norris James; sisters, Annece James and Hazel Forbit; and nephew, Ted Michael Strain.

Dalton is survived by his children, Garrett James of Idabel, Lance Poafpybitty of Idabel, Lionel Poafpybitty of Idabel, Michele Vanhoose of Lawton, and Sarah Poafpybitty of Lawton; sisters, Evelyn Tims of Oklahoma City and Cledith Harding of Okmulgee; 12 grandchildren, four great-grandchildren; and a host of nieces and nephews, along with many other relatives and a host of friends.

Interment was at Kulli Chito Cemetery, in Broken Bow.

Susan (Lewis) Jim

Susan (Lewis) Jim, 82, passed away on Feb. 16, 2015 at Atoka.

She was born on May 19, 1932, to Sampson and Addie (Williams) Lewis, at Bentley.

She attended Bentley School. Susan was a homemaker and housewife. She married Emmitt Jim on Dec. 7, 1948 at Atoka. They has 52 wonderful years together before his passing in 2001. Susan was a member of Macedonia Baptist Church in Bentley. She enjoyed cooking, gospel singing, quilting, being a Sunday school teacher and taking care of her grandchildren.

She is survived by children, Eldene Jim of Atoka, Ann Sleeper of Hominy, Lee Jim and wife Yvonne of Wewoka, Danny Jim and wife Jeneva of Stigler, Betty Jim of Ada, Rhonda Chalepah and Sean of Seminole; 26 grandchildren; 39 great-grandchildren; one great-great-grandchild; along with cousins, other relatives and many dear friends.

Susan was preceded in death by her parents, Sampson and Addie (Williams) Lewis; husband, Emmitt Jim; sister, Mary Ruth Davis; children, Carol Lang, Ray Jim, David Jim, Donald Jim; grandson, Anthony Jim; great-grandsons, Isaias Trejo, Titus Jim, Blake Lang, Kalyn Lang.

Interment was held in Bentley Indian Cemetery, Bentley.



Edith Virla Poe Baker

Edith Virla Poe Baker, 95 a resident of Bella Vista, Ark. since 1986, died Feb. 15, 2015 at Ashley Health Care in Rogers, Ark. She was born in Sardis, Okla., on Nov. 17, 1919.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Silas and Vina Bohanon Bell; her first husband O. Dixon Poe and her second husband Glen Baker; her stepson Stewart Baker; brother George W. Bell; and sister Imogene Horton.

She is survived by one son, George D. Poe and wife Virgie; one daughter, Mary E. Catron and husband Melvin, both of Bella Vista, Ark.; three step-daughters, Janet Nevalenian, Cynthia Waggoner, Marian Mayo; one grandson, John T. Poe of Cheney, Kansas and wife Julia; one granddaughter, Edna Faye Brewer; one great-granddaughter Virginia Rae Kotyza; one great-grandson Garret Brewer; and several nieces and nephews.

Edith received her B.A. degree from Southeastern State at Durant and did post graduate work at Oklahoma State in Stillwater. She married Dixon Poe on May 29, 1941 in Durant, who would become a Presbyterian pastor. Edith was a school teacher and she taught every grade from first through 12th at schools in Oklahoma, Indiana, Iowa and Texas as her husband was called to new pastorates. She became an associate professor of reading at University of Central Oklahoma and was a professor emeritus after her retirement. Then, in 1985, the Poes moved to Bella Vista, Ark. She became an active member of the Community Church and started a tutoring program at the church. She was Chairman of the Board of Outreach and on the Scholarship Committee. She was member of Bella Vista Art Club, nine hole golf and a bowler. She was a member of the Oklahoma Retired Teachers Association, International Reading Association and became an author of five books, two of which are published: "And She Married a Presbyterian Minister," and "Through My Classroom Door."

She was a member of the Choctaw tribe and very proud of her Choctaw heritage.



Ida Tubbee Taylor

Ida Tubbee Taylor, 75 of Madill, passed away on Feb. 1, 2015 at the hospital in Madill. She was born on March 22, 1939 in Durant to the late Columbus Tubbee and Effie Johnson Tubbee. Ida was raised and lived her entire life in Madill. She married Bennie Taylor on Sept. 18, 1955 in Ardmore. He preceded her in death on Feb. 11, 1997. Ida worked for 25 years at the Brookside Nursing Center in Madill. She was a member of the Durwood Baptist Church and she enjoyed watching the Dallas Cowboys, cooking and Choctaw singing. Her greatest love was her grandchildren.

She is survived by: children, Kenneth Taylor of Ardmore, Robert Taylor of Madill, Jeffrey Taylor of Durant, Donna Taylor of Durant, Janis Taylor of Madill, Evelyn Taylor of Madill, Andrew Taylor of Madill; 10 grandchildren; 17 great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; one great-great-great-granddaughter.

Ida was preceded in death by her parents; husband; son Curtis Taylor; one grandson, Erick Taylor; one granddaughter, Shellie Pahsetopah; two brothers, Donnie and J. C. Tubbee; four sisters, Alice Taylor, Agnes Taylor, Leona Jefferson and Bessie William.

Interment was held in Durwood Cemetery, Durwood.



Margie Lee Allen

Margie Lee Allen, 88, entered eternal rest on Jan. 26, 2015.

She was born Dec. 7, 1926 in Poteau to Virginia WillaMae Oliver and John James Allen as an only child and lived there all her life. She married Elmer Ray Dodgin and had two daughters, Phyllis Jean Dodgin-McCall of Heavener and Paula Joann Dodgin-Kapella of Palm Springs, Calif. She married Jack William Seitz Sr. and had five more children, Jack William Seitz, Jr. of Carthage, Missouri, Michael Lon Seitz, deceased, Patricia Jane Seitz-Holloman of Anza, Calif., John Walton Seitz, Sr. of the home in Poteau, Nancy Lee Seitz-Hamilton of Anza, Calif.

She was a beautician and Certified Nurse Assistant when she wasn't raising her children as a single parent most of her life. She was also a contestant on Jack Bailey's Queen For a Day and won that title in 1951. She was a wonderful loving mother. We will miss her sweet smile, spirit and singing voice.

She is leaving behind 22 grandchildren, 43 great-grandchildren, and four great-great-grandchildren.

Private family services will be held in several states simultaneously.

Mina Roselin Miguel-Alexander

"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."

Mina Roselin Miguel-Alexander, infant daughter of Jaime ChicoHolguin and Shannon Marie Mendez passed away Feb. 18, 2015 at DeQueen, Arkansas at the age of five months and ten days. She was born Sept. 8, 2014 at Idabel.

She was a happy baby who loved to eat and play with her brother and sister. She loved to smile at her mama and papa.

Mina leaves to cherish her memory, mother, Shannon Mendez and father, Jaime ChicoHolguin of Broken Bow; brothers, Miguel Mendez of Mexico and Julian Miguel-Alexander of Broken Bow; sisters, Yesenia Reyes Alexander of Hugo, Felisia Miguel-Alexander of Broken Bow and Samantha Marie Mendez of Mexico; grandmother, Theresa Alexander of Hugo; aunt and uncle, Emeterio and Ricarda Ramirez of DeQueen, Arkansas; numerous cousins, other relatives and family friends.

She was preceded in death by her grandfather, Johnny Shomo; grandmother, Conrada Ramirez; aunt, Lena Garcia; great-grandparents, Evalina Alexander, Alec Alexander, Nellie Shomo and J.D. Shomo.

Interment was at Black River Cemetery at Golden, Okla.



David Bell Williams

David Bell Williams, 82, of Pocola, passed away Feb. 15, 2015 at the Oklahoma Veterans Center in Talihina, where he was a resident. David was born on Dec. 2, 1932 in Poteau, to Reginald Bell and Nancy Ann (Willis) Williams. David graduated from Goodland Indian School, Hugo, in 1952. After high school he served in the Navy for three years and was a Korean War Veteran. He was proud of his military service and proud to be a Choctaw Veteran. After the Navy, David was an auto body repairman and painter for 45 years, owning and operating Williams Body Shop in Pocola. He was married to Sue Shadwick on Aug. 29, 1975. David was a member of the Goodland Presbyterian Church in Hugo.

David was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, James Kenneth, Harrell Leo and Robert Frank Williams; son, Joe Cantrell; and grandson Joey Cantrell.

Survivors include his wife, Sue; daughter Belinda and husband Jacky Connelly; son, Jackie Cantrell and wife Nelly all of Pocola; daughters, Holly Thompson of Ruidoso, N.M. and Piper Darnell of Phoenix, Ariz.; sisters, Virginia Johnson of Poteau, Ramona and husband Dr. William McCready of Seneca, Mo.; brothers, Neal Williams of Gilmer, Texas and Reggie Williams with wife Barbara of Idabel; granddaughters, Brandi and husband Matt Hendricks, Jacee and husband Caleb Banning, Christine, Stephanie and Jordan Darnell; grandsons, Rex Thompson, David Thompson and Darrien Thomas; great-grandchildren, Tatum Belle, Cadence, Christian; numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives, loved ones and friends.

Graveside services were held at Willis Cemetery, Poteau, with Revs. Tim Trent & Jim Cook, as well as Dr. William McCready officiating.

Douglas Dewayne 'Doug' David

Douglas Dewayne "Doug" David, 63, of Idabel, passed away on Feb. 24, 2015 in Paris, Texas. Doug was born Nov. 12, 1951 in Talihina, the son of Wyndle David and Nadean (Snead) David and had lived in Idabel for approximately 30 years. He was preceded in death by his father and his brother, Jerry David.

Doug was a Physician Assistant and was employed with David's Home Health of Fort Towson. He had also worked for many years at McCurtain Memorial Hospital in Idabel. He was a member of the OU Medical Alumni Club and Oklahoma Physician Assistants. He enjoyed playing golf, loved music, cooking, playing poker and spending time with his family. Doug was of the Baptist faith.

Survivors include: His mother, Nadean David of Fort Towson; three sons, D.J. David and wife Lynci of Idabel, Casey David and wife Kristin of Idabel and Cody Cheney of Paris, Texas; daughters, Erica Bourne and husband Geoff of Allen, Texas, Stacey Penner and husband Sam of Antlers, Nikki Miller and husband Jesse of Broken Bow, and Jill Boyd of San Luis Obispo, Calif.; one sister, Cathey Hooker and husband Larry of Clayton; five grandchildren; special friend, Kimberly Battiest of Idabel.

Ruth Ann McClendon

Ruth Ann McClendon passed away suddenly and unexpectedly on Feb. 9, 2015. She leaves a big void in our lives and will be greatly missed. She was born on April 7, 1937 in Clayton, to Oscar Jefferson and Fronia McKinney, and was a proud blood member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

She leaves behind her husband William Tracy McClendon of Myrtle Creek, Oregon; sons Richard Broyles and wife April of Myrtle Creek, Oregon, Danny Broyles and wife Robin of Hackett, Ark., Russell Broyles and wife Tammie of Glide, Oregon; and step-son Robert Zuver and wife Bernie of Winston, Oregon; seven grandchildren including Skip Broyles and wife Heather and Desiree Skeen and husband Jake of Twin Falls, Idaho, who were especially close to her; brothers Eudie of Roseburg, Oregon, and Mike of Bakersfield, Calif.; sisters Wanda of Bakersfield, Calif., and Paula of Aurora, Colo.

She was a talented, wonderful lady and a help to many people. She never met a stranger and enticed a smile from everyone she met. May she ever rest in peace and happiness.

Noah Lewis

Noah Lewis, 93, was called to his Heavenly home on Jan. 9, 2015. The son of Jesse and Rena Lewis, he was born Dec. 18, 1921 in Tushka. Noah attended Chillicothe Indian School and later Okmulgee A&M. He honorably served his country in the U.S. Navy during World War II and the Korean Conflict. On Dec. 23, 1950, Noah married his sweetheart, Pearl Mae Tims, and they were blessed with five children.

Noah was preceded in death by his parents; daughter, Linda Katherine; sister, Janie Fisher; and brothers, David and Samuel Lewis.

He leaves behind his loving wife of 64 years, Pearl; sons, Alvin Noah Lewis and Frederick Jesse Lewis with wife, Leandra; daughters, Peggy Ann Lewis-Jasper with husband, Steven, and Patty Marie Lewis-Thompson with husband, Ricky; seven grandchildren; and many other loving family and friends.

Sherman Daniel Armstrong

Sherman Daniel Armstrong, 94, a Lehigh resident, passed away on Feb. 20, 2015 at Lehigh.

He was born on Dec. 29, 1920, to Lewis and Maria Victoria (Burgess) Armstrong, at Harmony.

He attended Harmony Schools. Sherman was a Machinist. Sherman proudly served his country in the Army during WWII.

He married June Tilton. She preceded him in death in October 2004. Then Sherman married Delloise Brimicombe on Sept. 3, 2005 in Collinsville. Sherman loved gardening. He was a member of Mason American Legion and the Eastern Star which he had 50 years of membership certificate.

Sherman is survived by wife Delloise Armstrong of the home in Lehigh; son Hal Walker and wife Beth of Paris, Tenn.; daughter Cindy Lou Martin and husband Steve of Coweta; brother Virgil Armstrong and wife Marva of Marana, Arizona; sister Opal Berci and husband Ivan of Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.; granddaughters Kim Thomas of Newport, Tenn., Sarah Mae Erwin and husband Brian of Broken Arrow, Shawn Lei Beach of Hinesville, Georgia; grandsons Daniel Martin and wife Katie of Coweta, Hal Walker of Round Rock, Texas; 15 great-grandchildren; 12 great-great-grandchildren; along with numerous nieces, nephews, other relatives and many dear friends.

He was preceded in death by parents Lewis and Maria Victoria (Burgess) Armstrong; wife June Armstrong; sisters Hildred Marlow, Janie Smith; brothers Fred Armstrong, Edmond "Buck" Armstrong, William Armstrong, Aaron Armstrong; granddaughters Linda Kay Hall and Karen Dee Robinson.

Interment was in Green Meadows Cemetery.



Obituary Policy

Obituary submissions are for Choctaw tribal members and are free of charge. The Biskinik will only accept obituary notices from funeral homes or other official sources. Family members/individuals may still submit funeral notices as long as the notice is from the funeral home or printed in their local newspapers through a funeral home service. Full-length handwritten notices will not be accepted. The Biskinik strives to serve all Choctaws, therefore, any handwritten notices received will be searched online for official funeral home notices. If none are found, efforts will be made to contact the family and make arrangements for an official notice. Notices may be edited for space limitations.

Send official obituary notices to:
Biskinik
PO Box 1210
Durant OK 74702
or
email: biskinik@choctawnation.com

DURANT LIVESTOCK SHOW

Swine

Berkshire Breed

Class I: 1. Jaedyn Avants, Tupelo; 2. Deedra Tonihka, Battiest; 3. Jaeley Avants, Tupelo
 Class II: 1. Autumn Gamble, Broken Bow; 2. Sadie Snead, Broken Bow; 3. Jaeley Avants, Tupelo
Breed Champion: Autumn Gamble, Broken Bow
Reserve Breed Champion: Jaedyn Avants, Tupelo

Chester Breed

Class I: 1. Hunter Mason, Hartshorne; 2. Mykay Carlton, Calera; 3. Skeet Davis, Rock Creek
 Class II: 1. Hudson Long, Dibble; 2. Ethan Bean, Broken Bow; 3. Suzy Snead, Broken Bow
Breed Champion: Hudson Long, Dibble
Reserve Breed Champion: Hunter Mason, Hartshorne

Duroc Breed

Class I: 1. Korri Waitman, Dibble; 2. Tanner Reavix, Broken Bow; 3. Hayley Reeves, Tupelo
 Class II: 1. Cody Hugle, Hartshorne; 2. Tyler Boyett, Rattan; 3. Abby Rodriguez, Tupelo
 Class III: 1. Cody Hugle, Hartshorne; 2. Holden Bell, Madill; 3. Clay Stoner, Rock Creek
Breed Champion: Cody Hugle, Hartshorne
Reserve Breed Champion: Holden Bell, Madill

Hampshire Breed

Class I: 1. Tyler Waitman, Dibble; 2. Cooper Wood, Rattan; 3. Brock Daniels, Tishomingo
 Class II: 1. Hunter McKinnon, Lone Grove; 2. Tyler Waitman, Dibble; 3. Jaylee Antu, Antlers
 Class III: 1. Macy King, Wapanucka; 2. Ian Rose, Rock Creek; 3. Hudson Long, Dibble
 Class IV: 1. Tyler Boyett, Rattan; 2. Dylan Robinson, Rock Creek; 3. Ross Davis, Dickson
 Class V: 1. Caden Goodson, Harmony; 2. Cooper Wood, Rattan; 3. Marlie Leathers, Rattan
 Class VI: 1. Briar Davidson, Coalgate; 2. Showna Cooper, Madill; 3. Holli Hembree, Antlers
Breed Champion: Tyler Waitman, Dibble
Reserve Breed Champion: Hunter McKinnon, Lone Grove

Poland Breed

Class I: 1. Hunter Taylor, Wapanucka; 2. Keona Mason, Tishomingo; 3. Chloe Crawley, Kiowa
 Class II: 1. Clay Stoner, Rock Creek; 2. Colby Ford, Harrah
Breed Champion: Clay Stoner, Rock Creek
Reserve Breed Champion: Hunter Taylor, Wapanucka

Spot Breed

Class I: 1. Alli Adair, Caddo; 2. Seth Waitman, Dibble; 3. Sara Snead, Broken Bow
 Class II: 1. Rowdy Wood, Coalgate; 2. Hank Bradley, Caddo
Breed Champion: Alli Adair, Caddo
Reserve Breed Champion: Seth Waitman, Dibble

Yorkshire Breed

Class I: 1. Tyler Waitman, Dibble; 2. Dillon Bowen, Silo; 3. Holli Hembree, Antlers
 Class II: 1. Sheldon Buchanan, Banner; 2. Corby Ake, Tupelo; 3. Corby Ake, Tupelo
 Class III: 1. Hunter Mason, Hartshorne; 2. Baylee Whitley, Colbert; 3. Jacy Wills, Kiowa
Breed Champion: Tyler Waitman, Dibble
Reserve Breed Champion: Hunter Mason, Hartshorne

Cross Breed

Class I: 1. Lance King, Wapanucka; 2. Denton Comer, Durant; 3. Tucker LeMay, Whitesboro
 Class II: 1. Cooper Wood, Rattan; 2. Baylee Whitley, Colbert; 3. Kirsten Gosset, Caney
 Class III: 1. Hunter Mason, Hartshorne; 2. Seth Waitman, Dibble; 3. Dillon Bowen, Silo
 Class IV: 1. Holden Bell, Madill; 2. Sheldon Buchanan, Banner; 3. Hudson Long, Dibble
 Class V: 1. Hunter McKinnon, Lone Grove; 2. Holden Bell, Madill; 3. Hunter Davidson, Coalgate
 Class VI: 1. Caden Goodson, Harmony; 2. Hunter McKinnon, Lone Grove; 3. Hannah Huddleston, Kiowa
 Class VII: 1. Blake Birdsong, Tushka; 2. Jase Collins, Wapanucka; 3. Tad Bradley, Caddo
 Class VIII: 1. Dillon Bowen, Silo; 2. Rylie Coker, Rock Creek; 3. Rowdy Wood, Coalgate
Breed Champion: Hunter McKinnon, Lone Grove
Reserve Breed Champion: Holden Bell, Madill



Grand Champion: Hunter McKinnon (above)
Reserve Breed Champion: Holden Bell, Madill
Bronze Champion: Tyler Waitman, Dibble
Jr Showmanship: Clay Stoner, Rock Creek
Sr Showmanship: Tyler Waitman, Dibble

Goat

Doe

Division I
 Class I: 1. Hunter Mann, Sulphur; 2. Johnathan Jones, Roff; 3. Jacob Jones, Roff
 Class II: 1. Alex Anderson, Eufala; 2. Tucker McCoy, Edmond; 3. Jackie Jo Coe, Caddo
 Class III: 1. Braden Allen, Silo; 2. Jaycee Watkins, Allen; 3. Hunter Mann, Sulphur
Division Champion: Braden Allen, Silo
Reserve Division Champion: Jaycee Watkins, Allen

Division II

Class IV: 1. Jace Milburn, Asher; 2. Shiann Tucker, Kingston; 3. Adyson, Barber, Silo
 Class V: 1. Jaycee Watkins, Allen; 2. Braden Allen, Silo; 3. Jace Milburn, Asher
 Class VI: 1. Alex Anderson, Eufala; 2. Colton Price, Caddo; 3. Chesney Long, Haworth
Division Champion: Jace Milburn, Asher
Reserve Division Champion: Jaycee Watkins, Allen



Breed Champion: Jace Milburn, Asher (above)
Reserve Breed Champion: Braden Allen, Silo
Bronze Champion: Jaycee Watkins, Allen

Whether

Division I
 Class I: 1. Hunter Mann, Sulphur; 2. Emily McConnell, Broken Bow; 3. Sara Snead, Broken Bow
 Class II: 1. Jacy Wills, Kiowa; 2. Jaycee Watkins, Allen; 3. Peyton, Mobbs, Tushka
 Class III: 1. James Jones, Roff; 2. Sierra Thompson, Kingston; 3. Racee Reed, Wapanucka
Division Champion: Hunter Mann, Sulphur
Reserve Division Champion: Jacy Wills, Kiowa

Division II

Class IV: 1. Peyton Mobbs, Tushka; 2. Jordan Luman, Asher; 3. Blaklyn Barber, Silo
 Class V: 1. Emily Jackson, Hartshorne; 2. Jacob Jones, Roff; 3. Blaklyn Barber, Silo
 Class VI: 1. Jacy Wills, Kiowa; 2. Jordan Luman, Asher; 3. Dylan Cope, Wynnewood
Division Champion: Jacy Wills, Kiowa
Reserve Division Champion: Jordan Luman, Asher



Breed Champion: Jacy Wills, Kiowa (above)
Reserve Breed Champion: Jordan Luman, Asher
Bronze Champion: Hunter Mann, Sulphur
Jr Showmanship: Blaklyn Barber, Silo
Sr Showmanship: Alex Anderson, Eufala

Lamb

Division I

Class I: 1. Hannah Maxwell, Talihina; 2. Alex Hackler, Kiowa; 3. Savannah Lantz, Holdenville
 Class II: 1. Zachary Nichols, Achille; 2. Taylor Chambers, Tushka; 3. Jay House, Kiowa
 Class III: 1. Jackson Rezner, Silo; 2. Hannah Carter, Calera; 3. Dayton Tisdell, Tupelo
Division Champion: Zachary Nichols, Achille
Reserve Division Champion: Taylor Chambers, Tushka

Division II

Class IV: 1. Taylor Chambers, Tushka; 2. Mackenzie Maxwell, Talihina; 3. Smith Paul, Lexington
 Class V: 1. Savannah Lantz, Holdenville; 2. Jay House, Kiowa; 3. Elizabeth Whitlow, Fort Towson
 Class VI: 1. Hannah Maxwell, Talihina; 2. Jill Sutton, Tushka; 3. Smith Paul, Lexington
Division Champion: Savannah Lantz, Holdenville
Reserve Division Champion: Taylor Chambers, Tushka

Division III

Class VII: 1. Taylor Chambers, Tushka; 2. Jackson Rezner, Silo; 3. Sydnee Brown, Calera
 Class VIII: 1. Savannah Lantz, Holdenville; 2. Seth Tucker, Lindsay; 3. Austin Ruppe, Wynnewood
 Class IX: 1. Sydnee Brown, Calera; 2. Cassidy Courtwright, Rattan; 3. Mackenzie Maxwell, Talihina
Division Champion: Savannah Lantz, Holdenville
Reserve Division Champion: Seth Tucker, Lindsay



Grand Champion: Savannah Lantz, Holdenville



Reserve Grand Champion: Zachary Nichols (above)
Bronze Champion: Taylor Chambers, Tushka
Jr Showman: Sydnee Brown, Calera
Sr Showman: Savannah Lantz, Holdenville

Bovine

Heifer, English Division

Class I: 1. Lexie Lerblance, McAlester; 2. Caleb Hitchcock, Boswell; 3. Piper Dudley, Dickson
 Class II: 1. Emily Morris, Fort Towson; 2. Jracee Ayers, Moyers
 Class III: 1. Hunter Pierce, Caddo; 2. Lexi Henderson, Lone Grove; 3. Abigail Nunn, Thackerville

Class IV: 1. Callie Briggs, McAlester; 2. Abigail Nunn, Thackerville; 3. Ansley Campbell, Bells
Breed Champion: Hunter Pierce, Caddo
Reserve Breed Champion: Lexi Hunter, Lone Grove

Heifer, Continental Division

Class I: 1. Christian McGowan, Kingston; 2. Chance Sweeten, Dickson; 3. Kya Rhodes, Vanoss
 Class II: 1. Jessie Williams, Ryan; 2. Ashton Harrison, Stratford; 3. Lyle Graves, Lone Grove
 Class III: 1. Christian McGowan, Kingston; 2. Jessie Williams, Ryan; 3. Jacob Hartin, Madill
 Class IV: 1. Lexi Henderson, Lone Grove; 2. Braden Allen, Silo; 3. Ashlyn Kellam, Silo
 Class V: 1. Kya Rhodes, Vanoss; 2. Parker Mobbs, Tushka; 3. Shelby Gentry, Konawa
Breed Champion: Christian McGowan, Kingston
Reserve Breed Champion: Jessie Williams, Ryan

Heifer, AOB Division

Class I: 1. Bailee Allen, Silo; 2. Lexi Lerblance, McAlester; 3. Olivia Napier, Moyers
 Class II: 1. Christian McGowan, Kingston; 2. Sierra Thompson, Kingston; 3. Dilan Shipley, Kingston
 Class III: 1. Chance Sweeten, Dickson; 2. A.J. Duncan, Tishomingo; 3. Madeleine Smallwood, Antlers
 Class IV: 1. Margarita Loving, Kingston; 2. Colton Gentry, Konawa; 3. Kara Stanglin, Colbert
 Class V: 1. Ridge Stephens, Tushka; 2. Alex Thompson, Hugo; 3. Kaylea Bailey, Antlers
Breed Champion: Christian McGowan, Kingston
Reserve Breed Champion: Sierra Thompson, Kingston

Grand Champion

Christian McGowan, Kingston
Reserve Grand Champion: Sierra Thompson, Kingston
Bronze Champion: Christian McGowan, Kingston

Steer, English Division

Class I: 1. Ridge Stephens, Tushka; 2. Nathan Northcutt, Tishomingo; 3. Daniel Cullum, Silo
Breed Champion: Ridge Stephens, Tushka
Reserve Breed Champion: Nathan Northcutt, Tishomingo

Steer, Continental Division

Class I: 1. Alisa Northcutt, Tishomingo; 2. Abigail Nunn, Thackerville; 3. Abigail Nunn, Thackerville
 Class II: 1. Lane House, Tishomingo; 2. Judge Hartin, Madill
 Class III: 1. Dylan Robinson, Rock Creek; 2. Nickolas Northcutt, Tishomingo; 3. Taylor Dancer, Bennington
Breed Champion: Dylan Robinson, Rock Creek
Reserve Breed Champion: Nickolas Northcutt, Tishomingo

Steer, AOB Division

Class I: 1. James Kellam, Silo; 2. Olivia Napier, Moyers
 Class II: 1. Julie Cullum, Silo; 2. Kage Collins, Coleman
 Class III: 1. Clancy Foran, Atoka; 2. Jacob Hartin, Madill; 3. Tea Elliott-Fox, Tishomingo
Breed Champion: Julie Cullum, Silo
Reserve Breed Champion: Clancy Foran, Atoka



Grand Champion: Ridge Stephens, Tushka



Reserve Grand Champion: Julie Cullum (above)
Bronze Champion: Clancy Foran, Atoka
Jr Showmanship: Ashlyn Kellam, Silo
Sr Showmanship: Daniel Cullum, Silo

You are cordially invited to attend . . .

The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Legal Assistance Events

Samantha Guinn, a licensed attorney, will be available to provide assistance with simple legal documents. This service is **free** to all Choctaw members. Examples of matters she may be able to assist with are:

- Family law (adoption, divorces, custody, child support)
- Drafting a simple will, power of attorney, or living will
- Contracts and leases

March Community Center Schedule April Community Center Schedule

- 3/5 Hugo (at the field office)
- 3/12 Spiro
- 3/19 Crowder
- 3/26 Broken Bow
- 4/2 at Bethel
- 4/9 at Smithville
- 4/16 at Coalgate
- 4/23 at Wright City
- 4/30 at Atoka

9 a.m. - 1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Please call ahead during winter months to confirm events have not been canceled due to inclement weather. Currently we are not providing representation in court or assisting in criminal matters.

WILBURTON LIVESTOCK SHOW

Berkshire Breed

Class I: 1. Alexia Clardy, Haworth; 2. Carley Hightower, McAlester; 3. Emilie Cox, Talihina
 Class II: 1. Railey Spears, Hartshorne; 2. Kaleb Robison, Moss; 3. Ethan Shoemake, Porum
Breed Champion: Railey Spears, Hartshorne
Reserve Breed Champion: Kaleb Robison, Moss

Chester Breed

Class I: 1. Bryan Hawkins, Jones Academy; 2. Carsen McCoy, Woodall; 3. Cash Clardy, Haworth
 Class II: 1. Hayden Bell, Bokoshe; 2. Krystal McClendon, Eagletown; 3. Tanner McAlester, Wister
Breed Champ: Bryan Hawkins, Jones Academy
Res Breed Champ: Carsen McCoy, Woodall

Duroc

Class I: 1. Cade McCoy, Tahlequah; 2. Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy; 3. Braylin Harper, Spiro
 Class II: 1. Hannah Palmer, Palmer Academy; 2. Ethan Sparks, Antlers; 3. Christian Nester, Eufaula
 Class III: 1. Allison Beams, Howe; 2. Kaleb Robison, Moss; 3. Drew Spradlin, Porum
Breed Champ: Cade McCoy, Tahlequah
Res. Breed Champ: Hannah Palmer, Palmer Academy

Hamp

Class I: 1. Gunner Hass, Hartshorne; 2. Lexus Sewell, Jones Academy; 3. William Edington, Red Oak
 Class II: 1. Braylin Harper, Spiro; 2. Jalen Spears, Wilburton; 3. Noah Bryant, Talihina
 Class III: 1. Sarah Palmer, Palmer Academy; 2. Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy; 3. Kensley Yandell, Heavener
 Class IV: 1. Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy; 2. Baylor Jestis, Durant; 3. Cody Clark, Jones Academy
 Class V: 1. Grace Montgomery, Red Oak; 2. Rachel Beames, Howe; 3. Kensley Yandell, Heavener
 Class VI: 1. Baylor Jestis, Durant; 2. Shaina Spears, Wilburton; 3. Taymen Vocque, Bokoshe
 Class VII: 1. Kirklan Loman, Jones Academy; 2. Carsen McCoy, Woodall; 3. Caden Sumpter, Red Oak
 Class VIII: 1. Jaycee Cox, Spiro; 2. Kaitlynn Sebo, Spiro; 3. Isaac Bryant, Hamp
Breed Champ: Sarah Palmer, Palmer Academy
Res. Breed Champ: Kirklan Loman, Jones Academy

Poland

Class I: 1. Lexus Sewell, Jones Academy; 2. Kasey Ludlow, Jones Academy; 3. Parker Thomas, Red Oak
Breed Champ: Lexus Sewell, Jones Academy
Res. Breed Champ: Kasey Ludlow, Jones Academy

Spot

Class I: 1. Braylon Spears, Hartshorne; 2. Makenzy Stafford, Eagletown; 3. Chloe Rogers, Spiro
 Class II: 1. Brookelyn Cannon, Panola; 2. Jaxon Rogers, Spiro; 3. Titus Montgomery, Red Oak
Breed Champ: Braylon Spears, Hartshorne
Res. Breed Champ: Brookelyn Cannon, Panola

York

Class I: 1. Faith Palmer, Palmer Academy; 2. Drake Pound, Porum; 3. Cole Wilson, Talihina
 Class II: 1. Carsen McCoy, Woodall; 2. Brevon Harper, Spiro; 3. Charity Thomas, Red Oak
 Class III: 1. Braylon Spears, Hartshorne; 2. Railey Spears, Hartshorne; 3. Hannah Palmer, Palmer Academy
 Class IV: 1. Jaycee Cox, Spiro; 2. Cade McCoy, Tahlequah; 3. Grace Montgomery, Red Oak
Breed Champ: Braylon Spears, Hartshorne
Res. Champ: Jaycee Cox, Spiro

Cross

Class I: 1. Jalen Spears, Wilburton; 2. Noah Bryant, Talihina; 3. Braylin Harper, Spiro
 Class II: 1. Hannah Palmer, Palmer Academy; 2. Allison Beames, Howe; 3. Kirklan Loman, Jones Academy
 Class III: 1. Railey Spears, Hartshorne; 2. Isaac Bryant, Talihina; 3. Riley Sumpter, Red Oak
 Class IV: 1. Araceli Ortiz, Jones Academy; 2. Lainey Hightower, Frink; 3. Shaina Spears, Wilburton
 Class V: 1. Sarah Palmer, Palmer Academy; 2. Brevon Harper, Spiro; 3. Kasey Ludlow, Jones Academy
 Class VI: 1. Braylon Spears, Hartshorne; 2. Sarah Palmer, Palmer Academy; 3. Morgan Wilcox, Buffalo Valley
 Class VII: 1. Caden Sumpter, Red Oak; 2. Kasen Krebs, Heavener; 3. Baylor Jestis, Durant
 Class VIII: 1. Allison Benefield, Heavener; 2. Jaycee Kitchel, Hartshorne; 3. Chris Gallegos, Jones Academy
 Class IX: 1. Devry Ritter, Bokoshe; 2. Brice Cooley, Haleyville; 3. Kaleb Bottoms, Heavener
 Class X: 1. Jaycee Cox, Spiro; 2. Emily Jackson, Hartshorne; 3. Parker Thomas, Red Oak
 Class XI: 1. Noah Bryant, Talihina; 2. Isaac Bryant, Talihina; 3. Kensley Yandell, Heavener
Breed Champ: Sarah Palmer, Palmer Academy
Res. Breed Champ: Braylon Spears, Hartshorne



Grand Champ: Sarah Palmer (shown above)



Grand Res. Champ: Braylon Spears (shown above)
 Third Overall: Sarah Palmer, Palmer Academy

Jr. Showmanship: Braylin Harper, Spiro
Sr. Showmanship: Hannah Palmer, Palmer Academy

Doe

Division I
 Class I: 1. Jera Brown, Panola; 2. Isaac Walden, LeFlore; 3. Stephanie Seyler, Wister
 Class II: 1. Kallie Crawford, Moss; 2. Adrianna Curnutt, Wister; 3. Isaac Walden, LeFlore
 Class III: 1. Adrianna Curnutt, Wister; 2. Ceejay Robison, Checotah; 3. Makayla Crawford, Moss
Division I Champion: Adrianna Curnutt, Wister
Reserve Division I Champion: Kallie Crawford, Moss

Division II

Class I: 1. Lexie Moody, Moss; 2. Macy Willis, Bristow; 3. Rachele Hatcher, Indianola
 Class II: 1. Codi Robison, Checotah; 2. Jera Brown, Panola; 3. Charli Curliss, Hartshorne
 Class III: 1. Adrianna Curnutt, Wister; 2. Ceejay Robison, Checotah; 3. Codi Robison, Checotah
Division II Champion: Lexie Moody, Moss
Reserve Division II Champion: Adrianna Curnutt, Wister
Grand Champion Goat: Lexie Moody, Moss
Reserve Grand Champion Goat: Adrianna Curnutt, Wister
 3rd Overall: Adrianna Curnutt, Wister

Wether

Division I
 Class I: 1. Catelyn Grey, Buffalo Valley; 2. Adelle Miller, LeFlore; 3. Brynn Bibee, Stigler
 Class II: 1. Zabre Pound, Porum; 2. Brynn Bibee, Stigler; 3. Irish Alex, LeFlore
 Class III: 1. Jera Brown, Panola; 2. Selby Tamplin, Valliant; 3. Cheyenne Kinney, LeFlore
Division I Champion: Jera Brown, Panola
Reserve Division I Champion: Shelby Tamplin, Valliant

Division II

Class I: 1. Emily Jackson, Hartshorne; 2. Charli Curliss, Hartshorne; 3. Brileigh Thornton, Spiro
 Class II: 1. Jera Brown, Panola; 2. Rynda Wilson, Quinton; 3. Rachele Hatcher, Indianola
 Class III: 1. Macy Willis, Bristow; 2. Chloe Carver, Bokoshe; 3. Courtney Adams, Red Oak
Division II Champion: Emily Jackson, Hartshorne
Reserve Division II Champion: Charli Curliss, Hartshorne
Grand Champion: Emily Jackson (shown above)



Reserve Grand Champion: Charli Curliss, Hartshorne
 3rd Overall: Jera Brown, Panola
Jr. Showmanship: Jera Brown, Panola
Sr. Showmanship: Adrianna Curnutt, Wister

Sheep

Division I
 Class I: 1. Challis Johnson, Panama; 2. Bailey Cargill, Indianola; 3. Jay Rillian, Panama
 Class II: 1. Ashtin Hobbs, Spiro; 2. Isaac Walden, LeFlore; 3. Peiper Rogers, Spiro
 Class III: 1. Taylor McGill, Tuttle; 2. Emily Bennett, Yukon; 3. Carly Cox, Clayton
 Class IV: 1. Jera Brown, Panola; 2. Taylor McGill, Tuttle; 3. Emily Shaw, Buffalo Valley
Division I Champ: Taylor McGill, Tuttle
Reserve Division I Champ: Emily Bennett, Yukon

Division II

Class I: 1. Aspen Holder, Edmond; 2. Sage Holder, Edmond; 3. Kori Burge, Eufaula
 Class II: 1. Taylor McGill, Tuttle; 2. Emily Bennett, Yukon; 3. Sage Holder, Edmond
 Class III: 1. Kaytie Cash, Porum; 2. Madison Daniels, Quinton; 3. Emily Shaw, Buffalo Valley
 Class IV: 1. Kori Burge, Eufaula; 2. Heather Edington, Red Oak; 3. Sage Holder, Edmond
 Class V: 1. Rynda Wilson, Quinton; 2. Kaytie Cash, Porum; 3. Rynda Wilson, Quinton
Division II Champ: Taylor McGill, Tuttle
Reserve Division II Champ: Emily Bennett, Yukon
Grand Champion: Taylor McGill, Tuttle
Reserve Grand Champ: Taylor McGill, Tuttle
 3rd Overall: Emily Bennett, Yukon
Jr. Showmanship: Taylor McGill, Tuttle
Sr. Showmanship: Emily Shaw, Buffalo Valley

English Heifer

Class I: 1. Merideth Behrens, Colbert; 2. Madison Mitchell, Checotah; 3. Briana Cummsky, Eufaula
 Class II: 1. Rachel Booth, Miami; 2. Kagen Monks, Panama; 3. Colton Hulsey, Wilburton
 Class III: 1. Dylan Cantrell-Shelton, Checotah; 2. Logan Carver, Bokoshe; 3. Dakota Cantrell, Checotah
 Class IV: 1. Kaylan Plemmons, Battiest; 2. Jaycee Kitchell, Hartshorne; 3. Cody Bull, Panola
 Class V: 1. Zachary Ilbery, Checotah
 Class VI: 1. Ethan Shoemake, Porum
Division Champ: Dylan Cantrell-Shelton, Checotah
Reserve Division Champ: Meredith Behrens, Colbert

Continental Heifer

Class I: 1. Kyleigh Hilburn, Quinton; 2. Autumn Cato, Webbers Falls; 3. Kagen Monks, Panama
 Class II: 1. Kyleigh Hilburn, Quinton; 2. Jenna Simpson, Quinton; 3. Wade Harris, Webbers Falls
 Class III: 1. Blake Johnson, Checotah; 2. Trent Kitchell, Hartshorne; 3. Raychel Harris, Webbers Falls
 Class IV: 1. Rachel Booth, Miami; 2. Justin Herlan, Blue-jacket
 Class V: 1. Merideth Behrens, Colbert; 2. Hannah Palmer, Palmer Academy; 3. Jenna Simpson, Quinton
 Class VI: 1. Grace Palmer, Palmer Academy
Division Champ: Rachel Booth, Miami
Reserve Division Champ: Kyleigh Hilburn, Quinton

AOB

Class I: 1. Samantha Pearce, Porum
 Class II: 1. Isaiah Sallee, Warner; 2. Faith Palmer, Palmer Academy; 3. Raychel Harris, Webbers Falls
 Class III: 1. Leah Jae Pritchett, Cherokee Co.; 2. Cody Bull, Panola; 3. Konner Upton, Wister
 Class IV: 1. Bryce Gibson, Afton; 2. Dakota Cantrell, Checotah; 3. Harmony Lee, Durant
 Class V: 1. Rachel Booth, Miami; 2. Kaylee Mattioda, Hartshorne; 3. Samantha Pearce, Porum
 Class VI: 1. Cheyanne Buzan, Morris; 2. Brianna Cummsky, Eufaula; 3. Jace Ford, Kinta
 Class VII: 1. Blake Johnson, Checotah; 2. Cheyanne Buzan, Morris
 Class VIII: 1. Autumn Cato, Webbers Falls; 2. Lani Monks, Panama
 Class IX: 1. Kaytie Cash, Porum; 2. Jenna Simpson, Quinton
 Class X: 1. Merideth Behrens, Colbert; 2. Isaiah Sallee, Warner
Division Champ: Rachel Booth, Miami
Reserve Division Champ: Leah Pritchett, Cherokee Co.



Supreme Champion: Rachel Booth (shown above)



Reserve Supreme Champion: Dylan Cantrell-Shelton (shown above)
 3rd Overall: Rachel Booth, Miami

English Steer

Class I: 1. Jace Ford, Kinta; 2. Cody Bull, Panola
English Steer Division Champ: Jace Ford, Kinta
English Steer Reserve Division Champ: Cody Bull, Panola

Continental Steer

Class I: 1. Breanna Elliott, Quapaw; 2. Abby Cato, Savanna; 3. Bryce Gibson, Afton
 Class II: 1. Seth Barnes, Commerce; 2. Makinsie Barnes, Fairland
 Class III: 1. Justin Herlan, Bluejacket; 2. Benny Mattioda, Hartshorne
 Class IV: 1. Harmony Lee, Durant; 2. Jace Ford, Kinta
Division Champion: Harmony Lee, Durant
Reserve Champion: Jace Ford, Kinta

AOB Steer

Class I: 1. Kolby Cato, Savanna
 Class II: 1. Christian Mathis, Crowder; 2. Jenna Simpson, Quinton
 Class III: 1. Lucille Gardner-Wann, Kinta
Division Champion: Kolby Cato, Savanna
Reserve Division Champion: Lucille Gardner-Wann, Kinta



Grand Champ: Harmony Lee (shown above)
Reserve Grand Champ: Kolby Cato, Savanna
 3rd Overall: Jace Ford, Kinta
Jr. Showmanship: Dakota Cantrell-Shelton, Checotah
Sr. Showmanship: Kyleigh Hilburn, Quinton



Grand Champion Goat: Lexie Moody, Moss

PEOPLE YOU KNOW

Partridge places first in STAR event



Karis Partridge, 14-year-old 8th grade student from Wright City Junior High School, received a first place medal for competing in a Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) "STAR" Event.

Partridge is the Vice President of her FCCLA Chapter. She had won first place in district competition earlier in the school year, qualifying her for this regional competition. Par-

tridge will now compete on a state level representing her school and several counties in Southeastern Oklahoma.

Jones works as page for state rep.



Ashley Jones, a senior at Anadarko High School, was a weekly page for Representative Lisa J. Billy. Ashley is the daughter of Shelby and DeDe Jones. Ashley is a Choctaw citizen and plans to attend Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant in the fall.

Halford attends TRIO day at capitol



Elijah Halford, Choctaw citizen from Broken Bow, recently attended the annual TRIO day held at the state capitol. Elijah is a first year student at Carl Albert Junior College. While at the Capitol Elijah dropped by the office of Representative Lisa J. Billy, to visit about college.

Smalling paints Baroness Nicholson



Oklahoma Supreme Court Justice Yvonne Kauger and the Sovereignty Symposium commissioned a portrait of Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne in 2013.

Choctaw artist D.G. Smalling (pictured above with the Baroness) created this portrait, which was placed in the House of Lords, the upper house of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.

The Baroness then invited Smalling into the House of Lords, and he was able to sit in during an ongoing session covering foreign aid.

The portrait is the first piece by a Native American artist to be in the House of Lords, according to the Baroness.

Mr. and Mrs. Amos celebrate 66 years



Bill and Louise Amos will have been married 66 years on March 26.

They have two children - Nancy Williams of Edmond and Mike Amos of Broken Bow. They also have six grandchildren: Justin, Derrick, Zach, Dayla, Nikki, and Andrew. Their great-granddaughter is Milena.

Choctaw author honored for book



The Modern Language Association of America (MLA) awarded its first prize for Studies in Native American Literatures, Cultures and Languages to University of Georgia professor and Choctaw citizen LeAnne Howe.

Howe received the honor for her book, "Choctalking on Other Realities," during a ceremony at the MLA annual convention Jan. 10 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

She is an international lecturer and scholar, as well as the Eidson Distinguished Professor of American Literature in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences department of English. Howe is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Native Writers' Circle of the Americas, was a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar to Jordan and was named a United States Artists Ford Fellow.

Folsom and RPWS honor veterans



Choctaw member and President of Red Path Warrior Society Eugene Folsom, of Dallas, Texas, is happy to announce one of his organization's major accomplishments.

Red Path Warrior Society entered a float in the 2014 Dallas Veterans Parade and received 1st Place in the Most Patriotic Float category. They are the only group to represent Native Americans in the parade and were a crowd favorite.

Their float consisted of veterans and community members of all ages and tribes proudly wearing their tribal regalia and dancing to inter-tribal powwow music. "Yakoke to all our veterans, active service members, and supporters!" he said.

Head Start Policy Council Members named



The Choctaw Nation Head Start welcomed its new Policy Council members for the 2014-2015 school year. These Policy Council members serve as a link between the program, government, parents, and community - working with them to plan and coordinate the program.

The current Policy Council members for the program are:

(Antlers) Mailyann Jones; (Atoka) Leslie Benefield; (Bennington) Rachael Reynolds; (Broken Bow) Stephanie Brantley, Charity O'Donnell; (Coalgate) Cheryl Eaves, Carin Parrilla; (Durant) Natalie Cox, Keith Gray, Robert James, Marquita Hughes; (Hugo) Morgan Burgess, Christi Hood, Tori Smith; (McAlester) Nancy Paxton; (Poteau) Kayla Angel; (Stigler) Gail James; (Wilburton) Vickie Pruitt; (Wright City) Kristie Collins.

Community Representatives are: Staci Pettigrew, Amy Loyd, John Vick, and Angela Dancer.

Raney earns bachelor's degree



Jacob Raney, great grandson of original enrollee Levena F. Oakes McFarland of Hugo, graduated with a bachelor's degree in Science and Biology from the University of Texas at Arlington on Dec. 12, 2014.

"The financial assistance you [the Choctaw Nation] provided helped make it possible. I sincerely want to say thank you to the Choctaw Nation Scholarship Program for funding.

It's good to be Choctaw!" Raney said.



Clure celebrates first birthday

Sophie Nichole Clure celebrated her first birthday with her family and friends on Feb. 7.

She is the daughter of Katherine Webb and Jeremy Clure.

Morgan celebrates first birthday



Elizabeth Ainsleigh Morgan, born to Paul and Carrie Morgan of College Station, Texas, celebrated her first birthday with her family on Feb. 10.

Her grandparents are Kim and David Morgan of Bryan, Texas, and Helen and Jay Garner of Inez, Texas.

Morgan's siblings are Julie, Luke, Will and Scott Morgan.

Moody celebrates 88th birthday



Ida Bell Steelman Moody celebrated her 88th birthday on Jan. 9.

Moody is the daughter of Eliza Ann (Dain) White Steelman, an original enrollee, and granddaughter of L.B. (Buck) and Angeline White.

Ida Bell lives in Modesto, Calif. The wife of her grandson, Jenny, made Bell her birthday cake.

Bui celebrates 16th birthday



Aysha Bui celebrated her 16th birthday on Sept. 14. Her birthday party was held at the Charleston's restaurant in Oklahoma City on Sept. 20.

Bui is a sophomore at Shawnee High School. She is a member of the high school band and plays the clarinet. She is also a member of the East Central University honors band.

Her future plans include going to college and major-

ing in sports medicine.

Bui is the daughter of Christine Bui of Oklahoma City, and Wiley and Jenny Bui of Shawnee. Her grandparents are Olin and Bernice Williams of Bennington, and Nhan and Noreen Bui of Shawnee. Her family wishes to express they are very proud of her accomplishments.

Iker competes in invention convention



Ruby Iker, 9, proudly shows her entry for her school's "Invention Convention." The "baby sock drying rack" allows Ruby and her sister Lilly to help with the laundry of their new sister Jolie.

Ruby attends the Department of Defense elementary school in Hohenfels, Germany where she was also named to the Honor Roll. Her parents are Brandon and Anna Iker, also of Hohenfels, Germany. Her grandparents are Steve and Joan Iker of Silo and

Robert and Mary Rawls of Mead. Her great-grandmother is Dolores White Kiser of Silo.

Ruby is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, and is the great-great-great granddaughter of original enrollee Ida Austin Whitfield.

Miller earns second master's degree



Brett Miller, of Fort Towson, graduated with a master's degree in Christian Studies from Union University Dec. 13 during the fall commencement service at West Jackson Baptist Church.

Miller is a science teacher at Wright City Public School and the full time pastor at Mayes Baptist Church in Pushmataha County.

He has earned two master's degrees, his first being in administration.

He is married to Melissa Miller, who teaches at Rattan, and father to Asa and Faith Miller who both attend school at Rattan Public Schools.

Gilbert visits Washington DC



Micha Gilbert attended a Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA) Banquet in Washington DC, representing the Choctaw Nation Higher Education Department.

Micha is shown with Dr. Randy Smith, President/Director of the Rural Community College Alliance. Dr. Smith is a Choctaw Tribal Member from Olustee.

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

April 2015

Durant - Mon., Wed. and Fri.

Broken Bow - Mon., Wed. and Fri.; Idabel by appt.

Phone: 580-326-8304; Fax: 580-326-0115 Email: ddavenport@choctawnation.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Broken Bow 8:00-4:30 Idabel by appt.	2	3	4
5	6 Durant 8:00-4:30	7 Talihina 10:00-2:00 Wilburton by appt.	8 Antlers by appt.	9	10 Wright City by appt.	11
12	13 Durant 8:00-4:30	14 Poteau 11:30-1:00	15 McAlester 10:00-2:00	16	17 Broken Bow 8:00-4:30 Idabel by appt.	18
19	20 Durant 8:00-4:30	21 Stigler by appt.	22	23	24 Atoka by appt. Coalgate by appt.	25
26	27 Durant 8:00-4:30	28 Crowder by appt.	29	30		

State of the Choctaw Language School

Where we are and where we are going

By BRANDON FRYE

Choctaw Nation

Through the work and dedication of many Choctaws over the years, our language has remained a legacy that is still thriving. The Choctaw language's ongoing story has a rich history, with characters ranging from chiefs to community members playing a role. And looking forward, there are a number of exciting developments for the Choctaw language and the school dedicated to teaching it: "Chahta Anumpa Aikihvna," or the School of Choctaw Language.

- Where we were -

For Choctaws, the language is a way of "tracking back to who we are. And if you don't know who you are, you don't know where you are going," according to Jim Parrish, Executive Director of Education School Programs and Director of the Choctaw Language School.

Ian Thompson, Director of the Historic Preservation Department, traces the identity of Choctaw people back through 500 generations of Choctaw ancestors who developed a unique community, spirituality, and language through interacting with the landscape of our homeland.

"This way of existing and of looking at the world is built into the structure and the words of the Choctaw language," Thompson said. "Today even after years of colonization, the Choctaw language is still at the center of all things Choctaw; it connects us with our indigenous roots, relationships, and spirituality."

In the 19th century, the Choctaw language gained an advocate with Christian missionary Cyrus Byington who produced the original Choctaw Language Dictionary with the help of Choctaws in Mississippi, and later also with Choctaws in Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). With his dictionary—as well as his Choctaw translations for Christian hymns, parts of the Old Testament, and the entire New Testamen—

the helped the Choctaws form their words into a written language. Up until then the language had not been written.

More recently, in 1997, the Choctaw language gained many more advocates when then Chief Gregory Pyle decided to create a language department and preserve the language, which led to the development of the School of the Choctaw Language.

"Chief Pyle told me one of the first programs he wanted to have would preserve the language," said Joy Culbreath, life-long educator and current Director of Education Special Projects for the Nation. "At that point, I began to figure out, think, and see what we wanted to do."

Culbreath collected a team of educators and Choctaw language speakers and pushed forward to teaching Choctaw over the internet and in person, to children, to students in high schools, and to community members in and out of the bounds of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO).

Since then, initiative has spread to Choctaw leaders, citizens, elders, educators, and curious students of all ages, all wanting to embrace their culture and learn their language.

- Where we are -

Chief Gary Batton has picked up the torch which Pyle, Culbreath, and others had earlier lit. "Chief Batton is carrying on all of these dreams and all of our work with the language. It shows that he is definitely on board for all we are doing with the language department," Culbreath said.

"Our language is what distinguishes us and makes us unique from the rest of the world," Chief Batton said. "It encompasses who we are as Chahta people as it reminds us of our rich culture and past."

Now, there are 18 Choctaw instructors at the School of Choctaw Language who are teaching students at many points of development in their



Photos by Brandon Frye

Executive Director of Education School Programs Jim Parrish and Assistant Director of the language school Teresa Billy in the lobby of the new school building in Durant.

studies, from children to adults, beginners and up.

These first and second language speakers share their knowledge to all of the Choctaw Nation's head start locations, teaching our youth Choctaw. They teach students from 38 high schools across southeast Oklahoma, as well as college students. Instructors meet CNO employees where they work for language lessons. And there are 33 active community instructors across the Choctaw Nation.

With the help of educators with the Nation, the Choctaw language is now considered on the same level as Spanish and French in our public schools and taught as a world language.

- Where we are going -

Today, "we are hoping to have the new Choctaw Dictionary published by the end of the year," Parrish said.

The newest edition will be made by Choctaws and for Choctaws. It will also be brought more up-to-date and will more accurately reflect the dialect of Oklahoma Choctaw speakers, according to Teresa Billy, Assistant Director of the Choctaw Language School. Additionally, the new dictionary will be "easier and more user-friendly for the learner," Billy said. "In 100 years, when we are not here, someone should be able to sit down, look at this dictionary, and learn."

After finalization of the new dictionary, avenues for an online audio-dictionary and mobile applications will open up. These interactive learning opportunities would contain the approximately 4,000 Choctaw words, as well as sentences, also available in the new published dictionary.

There is also a new curriculum textbook on the way. Billy said, in addition to the completed Choctaw I and II textbooks, the Choctaw III curriculum textbook will be finalized and printed before the next school year, Fall 2015. This new

book will be used in college and high school classes by students and teachers alike, and will allow for a deeper, more advanced understanding of the language.

She added, "The content of the Choctaw I book is already on the website. Anybody who wants to download it can download it, chapter-by-chapter."

There are more instructors on staff right now than ever before. These instructors are a mixture of Choctaw first-language-speaking elders who have lived the culture and grown up speaking Choctaw, and their diligent students who have learned directly from those elders and put in the work to be able to also teach the language.

To continually bolster the number of instructors, two years ago the school began a teacher education scholarship called "Chahta Anumpa" (Choctaw language), which takes in college-level education students and—at no cost to the student—prepares them to teach the language. There are currently two student scholars, each preparing to work for the Choctaw Language School once they graduate.

The Choctaw Language school currently offers a unique Choctaw language learning experience. There are more educators available. The curriculum is polished and published. Anyone interested in reading, writing, and speaking Choctaw has access to Choctaw language experts who lived it—an opportunity that will not always be available. And the school offers many opportunities to get involved with the language.

You can also learn Choctaw by spending time and interacting with fluent Choctaw speakers, or by visiting www.choctawschool.com to view and study Choctaw lessons. Chahta chia ho? (Are you Choctaw?). Chahta chia hokmvt Chahta Anumpa ish anumpuhola chike! (If you are Choctaw, then you need to speak Choctaw!). We here at the School of Choctaw Language await and welcome all persons eager to learn Choctaw.



Instructor Elsie Hicks, first-language speaker, teaches high school students in Pocola a Choctaw language lesson through video conference.



Leigh Ward

"I was very blessed to grow up in a household where Choctaw was spoken. Learning how to speak and write Choctaw is essential to the culture, identity and heritage of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Our language is the backbone of our tribe. If we should lose our language, then we will ultimately lose our identity as a tribe and our uniqueness. If the Choctaw Language should become extinct, then other aspects of our culture would pass way, such as our sacred stories and lessons told and taught to us by fluent speakers. For these reasons and out of respect for our ancestors and current fluent speakers, The School of Choctaw Language challenges each member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to get involved in learning and preserving our sacred language."



Lillie Roberts

"It's a part of who we are. I am driven at this point in my life to give what I know of our language to anyone who wants it, hoping it will land somewhere and become something that will grow. And that person can leave it for someone of the following generation. "We can leave curriculum, we can leave what we developed. We can tell our stories and have those recorded. It's important for me to be here, to teach what I know, because it's a part of who I am."

"It's difficult to put into words how I feel. I want to do as much as possible in the time I do have left. And, wherever I can give, to whomever I can give, I'm there."



Caleb Taylor

"I believe the Choctaw language is important because it keeps our culture alive. "Language is one of the best ways to pass our heritage from generation to generation. It expresses who we are and where we come from."

Coming soon:

Team Tvshka Homma trading cards

Biskinik is currently gathering posed and action photos of Choctaw stickball players for an ongoing trading card project. We will start with Team Tvshka Homma, the official team of Choctaw Nation, but this could branch out to other adult and youth teams in the future. To submit photos for this project, email a photo with name and phone number to:

biskinik@choctawnation.com



(FRONT)

ATTENTION Choctaw Artists

If you are interested in participating in a juried and judged Choctaw Indian Art Show. Let us hear from you!

Please complete the following interest form in order to receive more information regarding the 2015 Choctaw Indian Arts Show held Labor Day weekend at Tvshka Homma, OK. **Must be 18 years of age & and a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma to participate.**

Categories include: Painting, graphics, cultural, sculpture, pottery, jewelry, & basketry. **Please complete the form and mail to the address below.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Mail to:
Shelley Garner - CNO Cultural Services
P.O. Box 1210
Durant, OK 74702

CULTURAL

Iti Fabussa

Ancestors of the Choctaws and the spiritual history of the mounds

It is in human nature to marvel at the great feats achieved by people of the past. The Egyptian pyramids, Stonehenge, and the castles of Europe are household words in the United States, even though they are located on the other side of the globe. By omission, American history classes often tend to make it seem as though the ancient people who lived in the Americas did nothing equivalent to these great achievements. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth.

Before European contact, Native American communities had, as a whole and through thousands of years, made world-first advances in agriculture, nutrition, medicine, ecology, political structure, philosophy, architecture, technology, and the arts. When these innovations were spread around the globe through European contact, they changed the course of world history. Our Choctaw ancestors were a part of all of this.

This month, Iti Fabussa focuses on one of the achievements of the Choctaw ancestors before European contact, Moundville.

For thousands of years, Choctaw ancestors had lived in the homeland developing societies that grew and changed through the centuries. Around AD 1000, these communities were obtaining their food through a combination of wild and domesticated native plants, hunting, and fishing. However, around AD 1050, they reshaped their diet and their society around corn agriculture. As a result, populations relocated to the broad river valleys around the Choctaw homeland, and reorganized their settlement system to make the best use of fertile soil for corn agriculture.

One of these burgeoning settlements was located on a high terrace along the Black Warrior River, in present-day Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. Today, it is known as Moundville. We do not know for sure what the people who lived in this community called it, but it may have been named "Zubusta" (Elvas 1993:105 [1544]; Hudson 1994:88).

Moundville was the center of a large farming community that stretched for 20 miles along the Black Warrior River (Welch 1991:23). At its height, Moundville was the



A view of three of the earthmounds at Moundville, surrounding a pond that was carved out when the mounds were created.

Photo Provided

second largest settlement north of the Valley of Mexico. It was a multi-ethnic community, and among its inhabitants were the ancestors of today's Choctaw people and several other closely related modern-day tribes. Construction of the 200-acre settlement began around AD 1050, and a defensive wall was erected around the town. At the center of town was a flat plaza. This was likely the site of spiritual events, a market place, and ballgames. Twenty-nine earthmounds were constructed around the plaza in a symmetrical pattern. Made one basket load of soil at a time, these giant mounds are monumental architecture and spiritually significant symbols of the community. Their arrangement probably served as a physical representation of the different families within the Moundville settlement (Knight 1998). One of these mounds stood as high as a 6-story building. Outside of the earthmounds, houses for 1,000 people were constructed (Steponaitis 1998:39).

Moundville was a seat of secular and spiritual authority for the regional population. Anthropologists believe that the settle-

ment had three different levels of leadership (Welch and Scarry 1995:400). The leaders carried symbols of their power in the form of pieces of artwork that combined high levels of skill, exotic raw materials, and esoteric references. People living in the surrounding communities supplied the leaders with deer meat and other items of food (Welch and Scarry 1995:395).

By AD 1250, Moundville was an established regional center for the arts. Certain areas of the settlement were home to artisans who specialized in particular types of work (Ensor 1991:35) such as shell-engraving, copper work, beadwork, wood carving, textiles, basketry, stone work, and hide work. Some of the finest pottery ever produced in North America was made by

artisans living within Moundville's walls. A few of these artisans came from several hundred miles away, and married into the Moundville community.

Moundville was also a center of trade (Blitz 1993:175). Some of the fine artwork produced at Moundville was exchanged across portions of the South and Midwest. People living at Moundville had access to shell from the Gulf Coast of Florida, copper from the Great Lakes, bison products from the Great Plains, and stone from perhaps as far away as Central America (Hammerstedt and Glascock 2008).

In the 1600s, after roughly 30 generations of people had lived within the town's walls, Moundville and the adjacent section of the Black Warrior River Valley were abandoned, probably as a result of European contact (Brain and Phillips 1996:354). Today, the legacy of Moundville lives on in the Choctaw people, the Chickasaw, the Alabama, the Coushatta, and perhaps other tribes. Designs created by Moundville artists are still used by tribal artists today. Some of the languages spoken at Moundville are still spoken by tribal communities today. Many of the corn-based food dishes that these communities are known for today were developed at Moundville and other period sites. In a way, Moundville is still a part of our deep identity.

The Moundville Archaeological Park is today recognized as a World Heritage site, managed by the University of Alabama. Each fall the University sponsors the "Native American Heritage Festival" bringing in Native American artists from all over the Southeast. Visitors to the park are welcome year-round. Touring the earth mounds, the plaza, the river, and the new museum can help a Choctaw person connect with a profound and living heritage, one that is unique but equivalent to the heritage built by the ancient peoples of the eastern hemisphere.



Three views of a restored clay bottle made by Moundville artisans (AD 1300 - 1450).

Chahta Anumpa

Aiikhvna

◆◆◆ Lesson of the Month ◆◆◆

Pronoun – we (all) - eho / iloh

First person plural (as everyone in a group) before active verbs. 'Eho' is used before verbs that begin with consonants.

1. Takkon homma lawa eho chompa chi.
We (all) will buy many/a lot of red apples.
2. Mjiko anumpuli eho haklo tuk.
We (all) listened to the Chief speak.
3. Haiyukpulo chaha ma eho chanla chi.
We will (all) chop those tall weeds.

First person plural (as everyone in a group) before active verbs. 'Iloh' is used before verbs that begin with vowels.

1. Palvska alwvsha iloh vpa tuk.
We (all) ate fry bread.
2. Aiimpa chukka iloh ilhkola chi.
We will (all) go to the restaurant.
3. Holbvttoaba lawa falammit iloh isht vla tuk.
We (all) brought back a lot of pictures.

takkon – apple	Mjiko – Chief	chaha – tall
holbvttoaba – picture	palvska – bread	chanli – to chop
homma – red	anumpuli – speak	ma – those
falammit – back, return	alwvsha – fried	tuk – past tense
lawa – many, a lot	haklo – hear	achi – future
isht vla – to bring	vpa – to eat	
haiyukpulo – weed	chompa – buy	
aiimpa chukka – restaurant	ilhkoli – to go, as in a group	

www.choctawschool.com

American Indian Leaders Youth Council of Broken Bow Public Schools

19th Annual SPRING POWWOW

◆◆◆ April 4, 2015 ◆◆◆

McCurain County Sports Complex
Broken Bow, Oklahoma



Schedule of Events

10am Stickball Games 2pm Gourd Dancing 5:30pm Choctaw Social Dancing 6:30pm Grand Entry
Master of Ceremonies: CHOOGIE KINGFISHER Head Man Dancer: BILLY KOMAHCHEET
Head Lady Dancer: T'ATA ROBERTS Head Gourd Dancer: DON STROUD
Arena Director: RANDY FRAZIER Host Southern Drum: YELLOW HORSE
Host Northern Drum: FLINT HILL Host Color Guard: CHOCTAW NATION COLOR GUARD
Honorary Head Man Dancer: TBA Honorary Head Lady Dancer: TBA Jr. Honorary Head Man Dancer: TBA Jr. Honorary Head Lady Dancer: TBA

MEN'S: Traditional/Straight & Fancy/Grass	\$200	\$100	\$50
LADIES: Buckskin/Cloth & Fancy/Jingle	\$200	\$100	\$50
TEEN BOYS: Traditional/Straight & Fancy/Grass	\$100	\$50	\$25
TEEN GIRLS: Buckskin/Cloth & Fancy/Jingle	\$100	\$50	\$25
JUNIOR BOYS: Combined, sponsored by Baylee Byington	\$50	\$25	\$10
JUNIOR GIRLS: Combined, sponsored by A'An Parra	\$50	\$25	\$10
TINY TOTS: Combined, sponsored by Keliagh & Adrian			
GOLDEN AGE MEN & LADIES: Men Combined & Ladies Combined	\$125	\$75	\$50

(sponsored by Southeast Thunder Stickball Team)

All Dancers must REGISTER & be in GRAND ENTRY to Compete.

All stickball players welcome.

Host motel is the Broken Bow Inn. Call for pow wow rate, (580) 584-9103. For more information, including arts & crafts vendor application, please contact: Dennis J. Parra (580) 584-3365 ext. 4069 or email: dparra@bbisd.org

Rehauna Williams 580-579-7991

No Drugs or Alcohol allowed No Political Soliciting No Videotaping Security Provided
AILYC has exclusive rights for video and photography.

Kielind Jim Center

HOMETOWN: STRINGTOWN

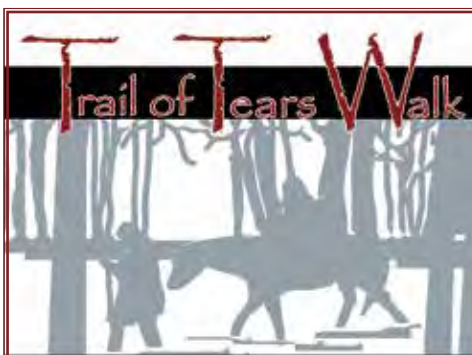
OCCUPATION: STUDENT

FAVORITE MOMENT: THE RIDES,
TRAVELING WITH FAMILY

QUOTE: "I PLAY STICKBALL FOR
MY LOVE OF THE GAME, AND
FOR MY ANCESTORS"



(BACK)



10 a.m., Saturday, May 16 at Tvshka Homma

The Trail of Tears Commemorative Walk will be held this year at Tvshka Homma. To honor and recognize the Choctaws forced to march from their ancient homelands to Indian Territory nearly two centuries ago.

College Clothing Grant

The Choctaw Nation is currently accepting applications for the College Clothing Grant.

- The Choctaw clothing grant is a "one-time only" allowance.
- A grant of \$300 is provided for a semester GPA of 3.00 to 4.00.
- A grant of \$250 is provided for a semester GPA of 2.00 to 2.99.
- Students earning a semester GPA of 1.99 or less can re-apply once a semester GPA of 2.00 is achieved.
- A COLLEGE transcript is required to apply. Applicants must be full-time students and must have completed at least one semester of college prior to application.



For more information or an application, call (800) 522-6170, ext. 2463.



Photo by Brandon Frye

Chester Cowen needles a bead for his new net-beaded necklace during the Meet the Artist event held at the Choctaw Welcome Center on March 3.

Choctaw Beadworker Chester Cowen knows his cultural art, teaches it

By BRANDON FRYE
Choctaw Nation

Chester Cowen, of Norman, was born to a Choctaw mother and Chickasaw father in Chickasha.

His parents stressed learning family history to the young Chester, and he would spend time with his Choctaw grandmother, often staying with her for three months in the summer.

"I was between first and second grade when I was sitting at my grandmother's dining room table drawing the poinsettias on the Christmas table," Cowen remembered. "Those are the first times I remember spending prolonged time in an artistic area."

He added his early days doodling were mostly play, he didn't get heavily into his own art until a little later in life. His interests in art and culture were apparent throughout, though, and after finding role models and elders to guide him, he found himself interacting more with Native art and identity.

"My first beading experience was in 1957, when a Comanche elder, George McVey, taught me Comanche style beading," Cowen said. And because he did not have Choctaw beadworkers close to him, he would attend events and have elder women criticize his work.

Chester was 18 when he learned from McVey, and their relationship even led Chester into traditional dancing and traveling with a dance troupe.

By the time he entered college at Oklahoma University, he was studying cultures across the globe through their art, and producing his own as a student double majoring in Anthropology and Art.

During his exploration into art and culture, he had waited on camel paths in Ethiopia bargaining to buy the combs riders would wear on their heads. Chester said he could tell a lot about the engravings on these combs, about the person who made and wore them.

He also spent time in Guatemala looking into Mayan materials. He constantly came in contact with earthenware pottery. Pottery was one of his artforms of choice. He enjoyed it so much, and produced so much, that professors in the art department would exclaim they couldn't afford to have him.

"Pottery is where I first got into art, hands-on, extensively. I would still like to get back into it, but when you are working with ceramic bodies, you have to keep a particular kind of schedule," Cowen said. "So, that was one reason for moving into some-

thing like beadwork. With beadwork, I can fold it up, and then open it up any place and work on it when I have a slot of open time."

Now, beadwork is what Chester Cowen is known for, and though he makes it a point to be knowledgeable in regards to the beading of many cultures, he specializes in Choctaw beadwork.

Chester Cowen believes everyone needs to be able to relate to their individual history, and do that by going back to the places and people where their blood takes them. He also believes we should be proud to express that identity.

"So, what are the simple things we can do to allow a Choctaw to identify themselves as Choctaw?" he asked. Then he pointed out simple things like the earrings a woman wears every day, a ball cap a veteran might wear, or the belt buckle he wears most times when he goes out.

"For me, this helps to give the person an identity, and a pride, and a way of showing it. There is no question when you look at these things that you are dealing with a Choctaw. If you pass me in the hallway or on the street, you can tell that I'm Choctaw and proud of it!"

For more of Chester's story visit <http://choctaw.link/ChesterCowen>

April's Meet the Artist Carolyn Young



Choctaw native, Texas potter, long-time teacher, Carolyn Young has a long list of credentials to her name.

Her specialty is contemporary Native American pottery. She works out of her Earth to Art Studio and Gallery in Weatherford, Texas. Using a potter's wheel and electric kiln, she listens to the Native flute music of her ancestors while working. She also has a unique way of hand carving to expose the rich colors of the clay underneath the glaze.

Her pottery is sold at the Choctaw Store and online. And her work "Plenty to Share" took the second place award in the ceramics category at the 2014 Labor Day Festival art show.

Meet Carolyn Young at the Choctaw Store on April 11.

Choctaw Store • 1882 Hwy 69/75 • Colbert OK 74733
580.296.2672

Free Will Preparation Clinic

at the following
Choctaw Nation Field Offices

APRIL 9, 2015: 400 SW "O" St., Antlers, OK
April 30, 2015: 2208 E. Main St., Stigler, OK
June 19, 2015: 2408 E. Lincoln Road, Idable, OK
July 17, 2015: 2750 Big Lots Parkway, Durant, OK

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Call 1-800-658-1497 for

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THIS PROJECT IS SUPPORTED BY
FUNDING FROM THE LEGAL
SERVICES CORPORATION OF WASHINGTON, D.C.

LSC



Photo by Lisa Reed

A group of Choctaws from all over the U.S. have fun performing the Snake Dance while wearing traditional clothing. They had come together during last year's California cultural gathering.

20th annual California Choctaw cultural gathering to be held May 2-3 in Bakersfield

The Okla Chahta of California will be holding their 20th annual California Choctaw Culture Gathering event May 2-3, 2015.

Choctaws from all over the country will come together at Bakersfield College in Bakersfield, Calif. to enjoy an assortment of traditional and contemporary events.

Make-and-take classes will be held for basket-making, pottery, and beading, so everyone can learn and get involved with traditional art.

Interactive games, like the corn game, chunky, rabbit stick toss, and blow dart shooting will offer fun for children and adults.

Food will play a large role in the celebration. Tanchi labona and grape dumplings will be served. There will be a free Saturday dinner, and a free pancake breakfast on Sunday while church is held by Olin Williams.

Young ladies of ages six to 23 years old will compete for Okla Chahta Clan Princess titles.

Youth and adult stickball will be played by those interested in joining, and traditional social dances will be performed.

To keep up-to-date on the plans for this event, follow the Okla Chahta group on twitter at @oklachahta-ca, visit www.oklachahta.org, call (661)-319-6308, or email choctaws@oklachahta.org.

Ralph Williston | Cont'd from page 2

One story always leads to another and Ralph remembers Charley asking, "Did you hear how the Choctaw would get their plants to grow tall?" Part of that story became the basis for the "Corn Seed Test" book.

Ralph believes every story has a "deeper meaning" and it is this "deeper meaning" that makes it a tradition.

"The Choctaw of the past adopted the good around them and one was the importance of education and books," Ralph said. "Now, the oral stories are coming alive again and can be remembered because of both the oral and written traditions. Children of all ages need these stories about how the natives taught their children."

So, like he has done for over 30 years, Ralph continues to sit down on a blanket, look the children in the eye and tell these old and now new again stories to children and youth in schools, libraries, and churches. If a child asks, "What is the Great Spirit?"

Ralph tells them that is just one of the Native names for the Creator known as God.

"Trapped On a Cliff" has been reprinted and the classic "Catch A Rabbit" is now out of print. Two favorite stories, "Fur from a Black Bear" and "Follow The Trail," are stories that children want to hear again and again and have told Ralph that they now tell their children and they hope that they will tell their children's children."

In his retirement, Ralph visits 15 to 20 schools annually. Along with his captive storytelling ability, he also teaches writing workshops, gives motivational presentations called "The Challenge" and "Super Science Goodies...making wise, healthy choices" to all ages. The challenge presentations are aimed toward sharpening the listening and visual skills of middle- and high school-age youth. The multimedia presentation includes the "four T's" of writing short stories along with the "Ralph Williston Writing Contest." All students are provided the beginning of a story and they compete by writing the best endings. The writing workshops are for third- through 12th-grade level and sometimes include as many as 300 students a day.

Over the years, Choctaw Storyteller Tim Tingle and Councilman Ted Dosh have invited Ralph to share stories at the festivals and schools in their areas. "When this man speaks, the children listen," said Councilman Dosh when he had introduced Ralph once at a council meeting. In February and March, Ralph will begin a tour of 15 schools in Texas, then Colorado, then Kansas, then . . .

Now this is a Choctaw who has stories to tell.

46th Annual Talihina Festival Pow Wow

April 11, 2015 || Talihina, Oklahoma || Gateway to Talimena National Scenic Byway || Talihina School Gym located on HWY 1 and 271

A&C Booth - Contact Mary Himes (918) 917-3246
Laura Durrant (918) 917-7363
or Carol James (918) 567-2539

\$30 Booth space plus item donation
Tables and chairs not provided

- Club Princess - Haylee Brooke Himes
- Little Miss Club Princess - Cheyenne Kynn Bearstops

Head Staff

MC: Vernon Tehauno, Comanche--Shawnee
Head Singer: Al Santos, Sr., Ottertrail Drum--Apache
Head Man Dancer: Thorpe Sine, Ho Chunk--Glenpool
Head Lady Dancer: Leslie Realrider, Cheyenne/Caddo--Norman
Head Gourd Dancer: Don Stroud, Cherokee--Tahlequah
Arena Director: Bill Takes Horse, Crow--Colbert
Honor Guard: Choctaw Nation Color Guard

Program:

2:00 pm	Gourd Dance
5:00 pm	Supper
6:00 pm	Gourd Dance
7-10:00 pm	Grand Entry & Inter-tribal dances

PUBLIC WELCOME-NO ADMISSION FEE
ALL PRINCESSES, CLUBS, AND DRUMS WELCOME

CULTURAL GATHERINGS

San Diego



Bill Harrison gives Elijah a drum lesson under the watchful eye of his father Michael Oliver.

Photos by
Ronni Pierce



The Crane family cousins with Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.



Lillie Roberts takes a break with family during the San Diego meeting (left to right) Zachary Hill, Yvonne Hill, and Ruth and Jerry Tremper.



Kristin O'Neill watches daughters Sadie, Peyton, and Julia get a stickball lesson from Seth Fairchild during the San Diego meeting.

Phoenix



Princess Jenna Phillips from the San Carlos Apache Reservation models her outfit made by her Choctaw grandfather, Robert Leroy Newman.



Rayven Witt signs up her son, Sirius Kim, for his tribal membership.



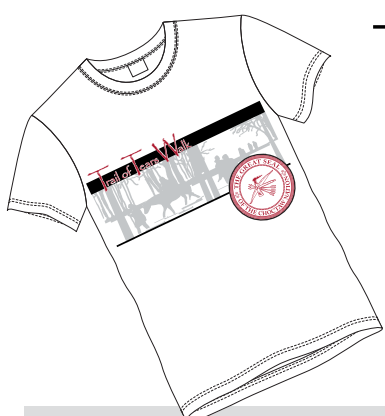
Audrey Hoover and her husband Howard from Prescott Valley pose with Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.



William Elder Sr. and William Elder Jr. visit with Chief Gary Batton after presenting him with the traditional native gift of sage.



As the Phoenix gathering was winding down in February, Chief Gary Batton and some of the attendees band together for a group shot.



Trail of Tears Walk

T-shirt Order Form

2015 t-shirts are white
 Sizes available are:
 Children - (2-4), (6-8), (10-12) and (14-16)
 Adults - Small, Medium, Large,
 X-Large, 2X, 3X and 4X

Item	Size	Quantity	Total Price
T-shirt - \$10 ea.	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
Cap - \$10 ea.	_____	_____	_____
Name _____			
Address _____			
City/State/Zip _____			
Phone Number _____			
E-Mail _____			

Price includes postage and handling. Limited supply of children, 3X, and 4X sizes.
 To order, send payment (NO PERSONAL CHECKS) with completed form to:

Cultural Events Dept.
Trail of Tears Walk T-shirt
P.O. Box 1210, Durant, OK 74702-1210

Short film finds big success



Oklahoma filmmakers and spouses Lauren and Jeffrey Palmer, of Norman, created the short film "Isabelle's Garden," which showed at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival, competing in the Sundance Institute Short Film Challenge.

Lauren is Choctaw and produced the film, and her husband Jeffrey, Kiowa, directed it.

The film was one of five films selected out of over 1,000 submissions.

The story is acted out by actress Isabelle Cox, former Choctaw royalty and granddaughter of Delton Cox, Tribal Council Speaker and District 4 Council Member.

The film tells the uplifting story of a community brought together by a young Choctaw girl and her garden.

Attention Tribal Members

The 2015 election filing dates for Choctaw Chief and Council Districts 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 11 will be May 11, 12, and 13, 2015. Candidates have the right to publish their information in a special insert in the May 2015 edition of the BISKINIK. The finalized guidelines for the candidate filing and the information they can place in the special insert will be available on ChoctawNation.com in the near future. More information will be included on ChoctawNation.com and in the April 2015 BISKINIK.