

October 2024 Issue

State of the Nation address highlights successes and challenges

By Kellie Matherly

Chief Gary Batton's 2024 State of the Nation speech went live online Monday, September 2. Since 2020, Chief Batton has opted for a recorded address that can be broadcast easily over Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) communication channels to reach more tribal members and others who are interested in the Tribe's progress.

This year, Chief Batton highlighted several wins, including three new Chahta Spirit stories, as well as some political and economic challenges the Tribe has faced. He began by thanking his family, Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr. and his family, Tribal Council and associates for their tireless work over the past year.

In housing, Chief Batton reported that the Tribe's goal of building 600 new homes by the end of FY2025 is going well. By the end of FY2024, over half of those housing units will be complete. When the project is finished next year, the Choctaw Nation will have built over 1,300 homes across the reservation.

The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) is one of the largest, most comprehensive programs the Tribe offers. As of June 30, CNHSA facilities had over 850,000 health encounters, including over 4,000 mammograms, over 900 colonoscopies, over 520 cataract treatments and over 8,500 dental cleanings. The hospital at Talihina also welcomed 347 newborns.

Chief Batton encouraged everyone to keep up with their preventative health checks, saying, "I am a huge advocate for prevention and wellness care like mammograms and colonoscopies, which you can have done at Choctaw Nation health facilities. These procedures save so many lives."

One of the Choctaw Nation's current strategic goals is to become the Employer of Choice. Several measures designed to bring in new employees and encourage current employees to stay and grow their careers at the Nation have had an impact on this goal. The total number of CNO associates topped 13,000 in 2024, and over 230 new positions were created between October 1 and June 30, a 5% increase over FY2023.

The Choctaw Nation was also named one of Forbes Magazine's Best Large Employers, taking top spot in the Government Service Industry and Oklahoma-based Companies and Tribal Nations categories.

Chief Batton opened a discussion on business and revenue by stating that the Tribe has almost 230,000 tribal members now. The Nation's businesses fund programs and services that help tribal members with housing, education, healthcare and more, but economic factors like inflation and the higher cost of goods have been a challenge.

Chief Batton said, "While the casinos continue to be an excellent source of revenue, the Tribe is not immune to inflation and the higher costs of goods affecting the global community."

In response to these challenges, the Tribe has focused more on efficiency and effectiveness, as well as streamlining processes and cutting costs to ensure critical operations continue to function.

Tribal leadership has also looked for ways to grow and diversify revenue streams, like partnering with Three Rivers Meat Company in Octavia, Oklahoma, and opening the Choctaw Landing resort property in Hochatown, Oklahoma.

Despite these issues, however, the Choctaw Nation reported a \$3.2 billion economic impact on the state of Oklahoma, based on the most recent Economic Impact Report (2021).

On the education front, Chief Batton shared that over 13,000 students received scholarships through Higher Education, the Chahta Foundation and Career Development. The total amount awarded was over \$17 million.

This year also saw the largest graduating class from the Adult Education Program. Graduates totaled 167, including several family members who completed the program together.

In addition to helping students meet their educational goals, the Tribe has ramped up efforts to revitalize the Choctaw language and encourage more people to learn to speak Chahta. At the time of the speech on September 2, the Apprenticeship Program was set to graduate 15 new speakers. The Chahta Anumpa Aiiikhvna (Choctaw School of Language) also served an average of 3,000 language learners.

"Preserving and protecting the Choctaw language is an issue that is close to my heart. Not only is it important from a historical and cultural perspective, but speaking our language is an act of sovereignty. For so long, our ancestors were discouraged or downright forbidden to speak Choctaw for authorities who did not recognize our inherent sovereignty. When we speak Chahta today, we are saying to those people, 'I AM a member of a sovereign nation, and I WILL honor my ancestors by speaking our language,'" said Chief Batton.

Chief Batton concluded his annual address by reminding the audience that progress is an ongoing journey and that it is everyone's shared responsibility to continue walking the path Choctaw ancestors began over a century ago toward a brighter future.

To watch the State of the Nation video, visit www.choctawnation.com.



Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation



Chahta Spirit: Sandy Pittman, Tribal Member



Chahta Spirit: Teri Billy, Assistant Director—Language



Chahta Spirit: Judge Ada Brown— Northern District of Texas

STATE OF THE NATION: BY THE NUMBERS

<p>\$3,227,364,212 2021 ECONOMIC IMPACT REPORT</p>	<p>1303 Total homes across the reservation</p>
<p>233 NEW POSITIONS 5% INCREASE OVER FY23</p>	<p>551 LEAP homes since inception</p>
<p>8,584 Dental Cleanings</p>	<p>239 Independent Elder since inception</p>
<p>4,445 MAMMOGRAMS</p>	<p>513 Affordable Rental since inception</p>
<p>904 COLONOSCOPIES</p>	<p>100 HOTEL ROOMS</p>
<p>528 CATARACTS</p>	<p>4,300 SQUARE FEET Square Feet of hotel and conference/Meeting Space</p>
<p>347 BABY DELIVERIES</p>	<p>600 SLOTS 8 TABLE GAMES</p>
<p>3000 An average of 3000 people served through the Choctaw School of Language</p>	<p>15 15 new language apprentices set to graduate in September</p>
<p>13,486 SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED</p>	<p>229,635 TRIBAL MEMBERS</p>

Faith, Family, Culture

Na Yimmi, Chukka Achvffa, Im Aivlhpesa



Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

Choctaw Nation Celebrates October with Awareness, Fun

I came to work the other morning and there were leaves all over the headquarters parking lot, and I realized that fall is here, and it is time for cooler weather and a list of fall events that we will recognize on our tribal calendar that are open to the public.

MMIW Conference

The Choctaw Nation will host the 2024 Missing Murdered Indigenous Women Chahta Women's (MMIW) Conference from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. on Oct. 21 at the Choctaw Cultural Center.

CNO associate and tribal member women are invited to an opportunity to support the MMIW

Chahta chapter, which hosts community events and assists families. Attendees will hear speakers and can network.

Lunch is also a part of the \$25 admission to the conference. The admission fee is part of fundraising efforts to go towards assisting MMIW with client's needs, whether it be towards housing, clothing, awareness materials, travel expenses and substance abuse assistance. Tickets can be purchased at mmiw-chahta.ticketleap.com through Friday, Oct. 11. Please email mmiw-chahta@gmail.com or Karris Hodge at khodge@choctawnation.com for more information.

Red Ribbon Week

The Choctaw Nation will hold several events to commemorate Red Ribbon Week on Oct. 23-31 here on the reservation. If you are not familiar with Red Ribbon Week, it is a week to lead and support our nation's families and communities in nurturing the full potential of healthy, drug-free youth. We also encourage all tribal members and associates to wear a red ribbon to show support for a drug-free life and to combat the destructive effects of drug abuse.

Choctaw Red Ribbon Week activities include:

Warrior Wellness is partnering with the Veterans Administration and McAlester Army Ammunition Plant for Red Ribbon Week to provide education on substance abuse signs and symptoms, as well as resources for support. The screening and referral stations will be a joint effort to support our service members and their families.

Jones Academy students will hear a presentation on the benefits of a drug-free life, the event will discuss supporting others, working together, and being a community. The event will take place at 10 a.m. on Oct. 28 at Jones Academy. After an illustrated story, they will have games and activities that will encourage physical activity and build self-esteem and teamwork.

Harvest Carnival

It's time to celebrate fall at the Choctaw Nation Harvest Festival from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Oct. 25 at the Capitol in Tuskahoma. Bring the entire family and have a night filled with fun and festivities.

- Costume contest for children up to 16 years at 7 p.m. (sign-in at 6:30 p.m.)
- \$1 Cake Walk
- \$1 Bingo
- Free games and prizes
- Trail of Terror (begins at dusk)
- T-shirt giveaway in the souvenir shop
- Haunted House and Movie (hosted by Youth Events and Activities)

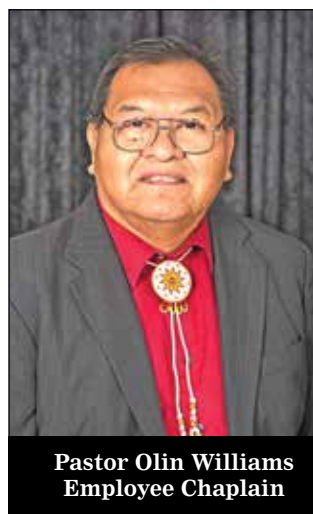
No strollers or walkers allowed in the Trail of Terror or Haunted House. Check your local Choctaw Nation Community Center for bus pick-up times and to reserve your seat if available. The event will take place at the Tuskahoma Capitol Grounds - Arts and Crafts Building, Council House Road, Tuskahoma, OK 74574

Halloween Stickball

The Choctaw Nation Cultural Center Stickball Field will play host to the annual CNO Halloween Stickball Game. Each October, players and spectators are invited to dress up in Halloween costumes and join us for a night of fun fellowship. Kids are invited to come out as there will be an opportunity to stock up on Halloween candy and enjoy a night of spooky fun!

Join us from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Oct. 26 at the Choctaw Cultural Center Stickball Field for some great stickball games and family fun for Halloween. Players can wear a costume to participate in the game. Costumes must be family friendly (not too scary).

We hope to see you at our October events this year; so please come out to participate in our Fall events.



Pastor Olin Williams
Employee Chaplain

God's Ownership and Justice

The doctrine of creation motivates Christians to share their resources with one another. God is the creator and author of all things, therefore, everything we have belongs to God.

In Genesis 1, God gave Adam and Eve "dominion" over creation. This is a call for the responsibility of leadership and stewardship. Man was allowed to rule over the works of his hands.

Psalms 8:6 says, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things under his feet." God gave humans authority over the world's resources but not ownership.

Psalms 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." In ancient times, the steward of an estate had authority over the estate but not the ownership. He can live comfortably and enjoy the fruit of his labor. His responsibility is to manage the estate in a way that pleases the owner and is fair to his fellow servants.

This concept may be counterintuitive to our society. We believe if we have success in life, we believe it is the result of our hard work. Therefore, we believe we have an absolute right to use our resources as we see fit.

The Bible does say that in Proverbs 6:9-11. "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard, when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep so, shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man."

If you have money, power, and status today, it is due to the century and place in which you were born. Also, to your talents, capacities, and health which none of these you never earned. All are the gifts of God.

David, the wealthiest man in Israel prayed, "Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; and thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thou hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and who is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." (1 Chronicles 29:11-14).

The ownership of resources and property are man's oldest rights expected. Social problems occur when man seeks ownership of what is rightly God's. Social poverty and illiteracy does not change very much because we may blame the failure of moral character and breakdown of family. Or we may blame government for not changing unjust social structures. Or we may blame parents. But nobody blames the children for being born where they were born. Some are born into poverty. Some are born into cultured homes. If there is no distribution of opportunities, and neighbor helping neighbor, this is injustice in the planned concept of God for his children.

OKCIC highlights alarming suicide statistics among Native youth

OKLAHOMA CITY - In recognition of Suicide Prevention Month this September, Oklahoma City Indian Clinic (OKCIC) is raising awareness of the urgent need for mental health education and support, especially in light of alarming suicide rates among Native youth.

Recent data from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services shows that suicide is the second leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native individuals aged 10 to 34. Additionally, the suicide rate among American Indian adults is approximately 20% higher compared to other racial groups. OKCIC is aware of how these statistics impact the community and has taken steps to provide essential resources, as well as partner with organizations like Rainbow Youth Project USA, to foster a supportive environment for those struggling with mental health challenges.

"We are pleased to offer comprehensive mental health resources to those who need them," said Kim Farris, OKCIC's Behavioral Health Director. "For generations, mental health was a topic rarely discussed within the Indigenous community. It's encouraging to see more people now acknowledging its importance and seeking the assistance they deserve."

As part of its commitment to mental health awareness, OKCIC will host a three-day Gathering of Native Americans (GONA) event for ages 16-25, starting on October 15 at 9:00 a.m. This gathering will address key issues affecting the Indigenous community, offering a safe space for Native youth to engage in discussions about mental health and suicide while deepening their appreciation for their cultural heritage. To participate or learn more about this event, please call 405-948-4900 ext. 519.

About Oklahoma City Indian Clinic

Oklahoma City Indian Clinic, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was established in 1974 to provide excellent health and wellness services to American Indians in central Oklahoma. The clinic staff cares for more than 24,000 patients from over 200 federally recognized tribes every year. American Indians can receive a range of services, including medical, dental, pediatrics, prenatal, pharmacy, optometry, physical fitness, nutrition, behavioral health, and adult, family and youth programs. For more information, please call (405) 948-4900 or visit www.okcic.com.



HSSS REIMBURSEMENT APPLICATION AVAILABLE NOW

REIMBURSEMENTS INCLUDE:

- ACT/SAT Test Fees
- ACT/SAT Study Guides (up to \$20)
- ACT/SAT Prep Workshops (up to \$30)
- Drivers Education Courses (up to \$100)
- AP Test Fees
- Career Tech Expenses (up to \$100)
- Post-Secondary Fees (up to \$100)
- Cap & Gown (up to \$50)

*Until funds are depleted

To apply for reimbursement, scan the QR code

The student must be a HSSS member to apply. To become a HSSS member, fill out the Student Record Release through the Chahta Activity Member Portal

Choctaw Nation High School Student Services

2024 HARVEST CARNIVAL

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2024
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Arts and Crafts Building
Choctaw Capitol Grounds at Tvhska Homma
163665 N. 4355 Road | Tuskahoma, OK 74574

- Costume contest for children up to 16 years at 7:00 PM (sign-in at 6:30 PM)
- \$1 Cake Walk
- \$1 Bingo
- Free games and prizes
- Trail of Terror (begins at dusk)
- T-shirt giveaway in the souvenir shop
- Haunted House and movie (hosted by Youth Events and Activities)

Costume contest participants must sign up by 6:30 pm | No strollers or walkers allowed in the Trail of Terror or Haunted House | Check your local Choctaw Nation Community Center for bus pickup times and to reserve your seat if available.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL **877.285.6893**

Scan the QR Code for more information

Choctaw Nation Outreach Services

JONES ACADEMY CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Did you know that at Jones Academy, culture and language are essential to every student's experience? Throughout the school year, students participate in many Native American cultural activities and experiences, including language classes once a week. In addition, many students participate in stickball, joining leagues and tournaments throughout the year.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT JONES ACADEMY, PLEASE VISIT JONESACADEMY.ORG.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEY

Take the Choctaw Nation Community Health Survey and give your opinions on the availability and access to various services that provide for the welfare, safety and health of our communities.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO TAKE THE SHORT SURVEY

Choctaw Nation Public Health

SEE AND SHARE OUR STORIES AT

TogetherWereMore.com

Choctaw Nation

SCAN CODE TO VIEW STORIES

BOLUKTA:

MISSISSIPPIAN DESIGNS, MEDALLIONS, AND MODERN CHOCTAW ART

EXHIBIT OPEN

APRIL 16 - OCTOBER 19

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

CHOCTAW NATION VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

November 11 | 11 AM
Choctaw Capitol Grounds (Arts & Crafts Building)
Council House Rd. | Tuskahoma, OK 74574

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

Please join us as we express our gratitude and honor our Choctaw Veterans that served and sacrificed for our country.

For any questions, contact Choctaw Tribal Events
800.522.6170 | TribalEvents@choctawnation.com

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Basketball



War Hoops, also known as basketball has long been a favorite at the Labor Day festival.
Photo by Chris Jennings



Young Guns Division
First Place: N8V
Photos by Christian Chaney



Women's Division
First Place: Natives



Old Timers Division
First Place: RS



Teen 15-18 Division
First Place: SE Hoops



Tween Division
First Place: OK Elite



Mini Ballers Division
First Place: All Stars

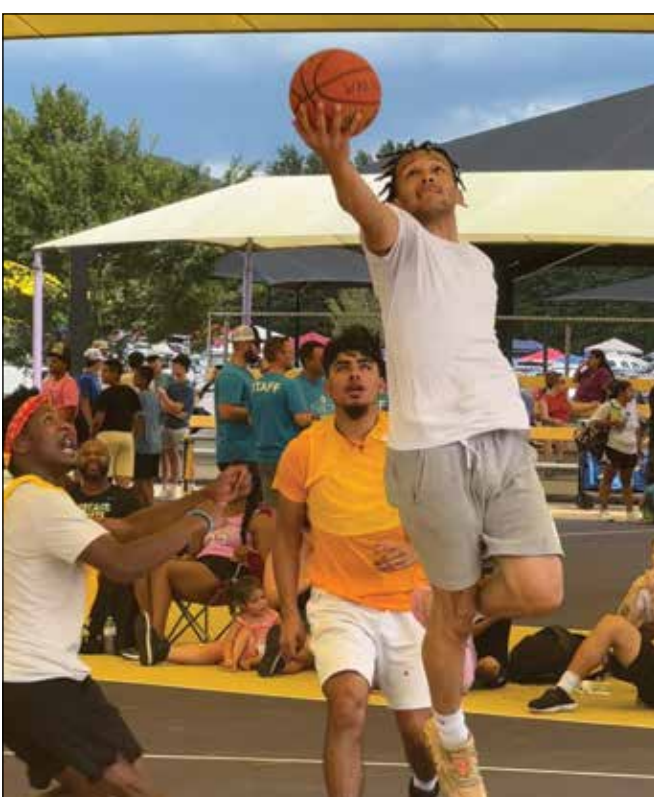


Photo by Christian Chaney



Alex Martinez gains the lead with hundreds of runners behind him. Martinez won the 5K in a time of 17:35.
Photo by Christian Toews



Runners and walkers begin the 5K race.
Photo by Christian Toews



Several runners crest the last hill on the Labor Day 5k route as Fred James, left, heads out for more. James won the 60 to 64 division with a time of 20:52.
Photo by Chris Jennings

Softball



A batter gets a ball during a softball game on Saturday.
Photo by Chris Jennings



Women's Softball Champions: Pokko Nafku
Photo by Payton Guthrie



Men's Softball Champions: Sixers
Photo by Payton Guthrie

Volleyball



First Place: OKLA/SIPPI of Philadelphia, Miss.



Third Place: WP3 of Okemah, Okla.

Labor Day 5k



Photo by Chris Jennings

5k Men's Division
First Place: Alex Martinez, 17:35



Photo by Chris Jennings

5k Women's Division
First Place: Jenny Chitwood, 21:03



Tyler and Elizabeth Branyan run together during the 5K.
Photo by Christian Toews



Kaia and Caroline Casey make their way to the finish line of the 5K run.



Quartermain Briggs asks for a splash at the turnaround of the 5K run.
Photo by Christian Toews



Photos by Christian Chaney

Second Place: Headhunters of Roff, Okla.



Photo by Mallory Jackson



District 3

Halito! With another Labor Day behind us and summer coming to an end, we reflect back to just how busy and blessed this summer has been.

District #3 had the privilege to serve a “traditional meal” to our communities. With a pleasingly large turnout for both centers, Smithville and Talihina served salt pork, fried pork, banaha, tanchi lvbona, grape dumpings, green onions, and many other favorites. Many thanks to those that had a hand in making this event so successful and enjoyable.

Our seniors have been busy. Talihina’s seniors took a trip to Nashville, visiting the Grand Ole Opry, Ryman Auditorium and many other historical venues. Smithville seniors took a trip to Branson to enjoy shows and shopping. The seniors put in a lot of hours and hard work

throughout the year, having many fundraisers, and these types of trips are the fruits of their labor.

Speaking of labor, Labor Day 2024 was a great success. The turnout was good, good times were had and the good news of a promising future was delivered by Chief Gary Batton with the State of the Nation address. We are a blessed Nation.

Congratulations to the 2024/25 Choctaw Royalty! Princesses Senior Miss Melea Jefferson, Junior Miss Daryan Eubanks, and Little Miss Ava Davenport, we know you will work hard and represent the tribe proudly.

Congratulations also to all the competition winners. The festival gives opportunity for such a variety of competitors and exhibits that we get to see the talents of many of our tribal members. Thank you all for your participation making this festival something for everyone and so successful.

So as summer ends, we turn our focus to fall/winter, which brings with it, a busy schedule. October 24, Smithville will host a fall fest, November 2, Talihina seniors will be having an Indian Taco sale during the Talihina Fall Festival. The dates and times for the holiday dinners will be published in the upcoming editions of the Biskinik. Holiday food vouchers will be available to eligible low-income Choctaw applicants living within the Choctaw Nation Reservation beginning October 1 at chahtaachvffa.choctawnation.com.

For the next few months, Brother Raymond Johnson will be leading a language social on the first Thursday of each month at the Talihina Community Center. A potluck dinner begins at 5:30 p.m., and the language class will follow. This is an informal gathering of speakers and those wanting to learn. Come join us.

Follow the Biskinik for the holiday event schedules and support the seniors whenever you can; they certainly appreciate it.

Yakoke. Chi pisa la chicke!

Cameron is First Language Speaker of the Month

Jean Hancock Cameron, daughter of Jeff Hancock, FB Choctaw, and Annie Ensharkey Hancock, FB Choctaw, resided in the Ash Creek Community and attended elementary classes on campus at Eufaula Boarding School. Then, she attended grades 7-12 at Eufaula Public School, where she graduated with honors.

Speaking your native language was prohibited, but she learned the Lord’s Prayer in sign language by studying books and watching Acee Blue Eagle when he signed off before midnight on Channel 8, KTVX, when it was in Muskogee. She performed this numerous times for school assemblies. She was honored when Chief Belvin asked her to be a Choctaw princess. This was declined by staff at the boarding school, thinking it would be a hardship for her parents for her to attend functions.

Cameron has enjoyed all her jobs, most notably working for the BIA in Muskogee. She later transferred to Jones Academy to be the Junior High Girls’ Counselor.

Cameron is a widow and a very proud



mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

A retiree, she is active within District 12 and participates in their activities and community volunteer work. She also took Choctaw language classes offered through the tribe.

A member of the Body of Christ, she attends Ash Creek Union Church, where she is the secretary/treasurer, pianist and janitor. She also helps maintain the Ash Creek Cemetery, which her great-great-aunt donated land for.

Jean is glad her parents instilled in her to be respectful, study and work hard, share and think of the needs of others, have fun, but most of all have God in your life.



District 4

Halito, and welcome Fall!

As we step into the cooler days of autumn, I know many of us are ready for a break from the summer heat. There’s been plenty of excitement in District 4 over the past few months, and I’m thrilled to share some of the highlights with you.

A big congratulations to Shirley Terry, who has been named District 4’s 2024 Chahtapreneur of the Year! Shirley is the proud owner of ‘Baby Bears Home Cooking and Lil’ Ice Cream Truck’ in Wister. Her hard work and dedication to her businesses have made us all incredibly proud. Way to go, Shirley!

In July, we celebrated a special moment with the ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the new LEAP homes in Heaven-er and Cameron. It’s always a joy to see families receiving the keys to their new homes, and this milestone marks another

step forward for our tribe’s growth and progress.

Our District 4 seniors have been active and on the move! The Poteau seniors enjoyed a trip to Branson, while the Spiro seniors had a wonderful visit to the Museum of Native American History in Bentonville, Arkansas. If you haven’t already, I encourage all of our seniors to take advantage of the Wednesday lunches at a community center near you.

A huge congratulations to our District 4 Chahta Foundation scholarship recipients:

- Brooklyn Latham (Poteau)
- Corbin Miller (Spiro)
- Emma Baker (Poteau)
- Kenli Lovell (Poteau)
- William Herrington (Poteau)
- Kaitlyn Glasgow (Pocola)
- Phillip Sanders (Poteau)
- Shelby Fitzer (Cameron)

We are incredibly proud of each of you and look forward to watching you achieve your dreams!

Councilman Ron Perry and I recently had the honor of attending the Camp Chahta Freshman Year Initiative Banquet at Carl Albert State College. With 37 freshmen kicking off their college journey, it was an inspiring event, and we wish all of you the best in your academic pursuits.

Mark your calendars for October 18! We will be breaking ground on our new community center, a beautiful facility that will serve as a hub for all of us to come together. We’ve outgrown our current space, and this new center will be a true reflection of our district’s growth and vitality. Join us for lunch at 11:00 a.m., followed by the groundbreaking at 1:00 p.m. I hope to see you there!

It fills my heart with pride to see District 4 thriving and expanding. As we continue to grow, I am always here to support you. If there’s anything I can assist with, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

Yakoke and God Bless!



Councilman Henry pose for a photo with new LEAP Home recipients.



Assistant Chief, Brittney Rice, Councilman Henry, Shirley Terry and Chief at the awards banquet.



LEAP Home recipients hold the keys to their new home.



Choctaw Nation cuts the ribbon on new LEAP Homes in District 4.

Gary Lindley honored as Veteran of the Month

Gary Dude Lindley, District #12, is Choctaw Nation’s Veteran of the Month.

Lindley was born in McAlester, Okla., and grew up and graduated high school in Savannah, Okla. He joined the National Guard in 1967 and served in the U.S. Army for two years, including a 12-month tour in Vietnam, where he developed lasting friendships. His family has a rich history of military service, with several uncles who served in WWII and many cousins who served in Vietnam. His patriotic connections encouraged his enlistment.

He was sent to Fort Ord, Calif., for basic training and immediately to Vietnam. He returned to Fort Ord for the remainder of his service time. He enjoyed touring the area and appreciated the beautiful countryside, amazing architecture, and rich history of the monasteries surrounding Fort Ord.

Upon his return to Okla., Lindley was employed by the McAlester Ammunition Depot and later became head of security at Arrowhead after it was purchased by the Choctaw Nation.

He moved to the McIntosh County Sheriff’s Department and rose to the rank of



Undersheriff. He met his wife, Carol, who was the County Treasurer. They have been married for 27 years.

Lindley served a term as the McIntosh County Commissioner, where he enjoyed working with his crew and the family atmosphere he helped to create. He served five years as Commander of Disabled American Veterans, Chapter Three, in McIntosh County before his retirement.

He holds his Choctaw heritage in high regard, influenced by his full-blood Choctaw grandfather and half-Choctaw, half-Irish mother, who instilled great pride in his heritage. He expresses gratitude for the leadership of Chief Gary Batton and Assistant Chief Jack Austin Jr.

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

LEARNING COMMUNITIES

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SERVICES

Scan to learn more about the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/HIGH-SCHOOL-STUDENT-SERVICES

Choctaw Nation High School Student Services

WILDLIFE & OUTDOORS

By Devin Lindley

We are in the midst of a hunter’s favorite time of year, hunting season! Hopefully, you have gotten a chance to get out and hunt this season. Remember that with the passing of the Five Tribe Wildlife Management Reciprocity Agreement, you can hunt and fish on the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, and Muscogee (Creek) tribal reservations.

Hunting has long been a crucial part of the Choctaw way of life. During hvshtula (the cool months of the year), families would take long hunting trips known as owa to their favorite hunting locations. Like many hunting families today, they would set up hunting camps at each of these spots, which would become the base camp for the hunting party. From these camps, hunters began their hunts by locating and stalking an animal. It has been said that these stalks could range up to 30 miles away from the base camp.

The most common hunting practice used was stalking the deer with a bow and arrow. Ancestral Choctaw people relied on issi (deer) as a source of protein, and they wasted very little of the animal that had been harvested. They would use everything that they could; the hides were made into clothing, bones and antlers were made into tools, tendons were made into thread, hooves were made into rattles, foot pieces were rendered into glue, intestines were made into bowstrings, and many other materials that supported the tribe. Choctaws also acknowledged a profound debt for all that the deer and other animals provided for them. This was expressed through dances and other forms of art that honored the animals and through managing the landscape so that it could support a larger deer population than would be possible naturally. This was done by regularly setting low-intensity wildfires that cleared brush and increased browse for the animals.

Because Choctaws were great conservationists, they understood that the resource needed to be properly managed. Today, this honor has been passed down to us to ensure that future generations have access to the same resources.

The best way that you can continue to do this is to report the harvest through the Chahta Achvffa portal. The importance of reporting your harvest is that it enables the Choctaw Nation Department of Wildlife Conservation (CNDWC) to have a better understanding of how the current deer population in the Choctaw Nation reservation is doing and if there need to be any changes to the management plans.

If you have any questions, contact wildlife@choctawnation.com or visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/wildlife-conservation/>. Stay safe and enjoy the Choctaw Outdoors.

Choctaw Nation Wildlife Conservation

Housing Headlines

By Bobby Yandell

The Housing Authority of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma offers our tribal elders the opportunity to live in an age-restricted, independent living community with residents who can live independently. In this type of community, seniors maintain independence for as long as desired or possible.

Independent Elder Housing is comprised of units designed for one person or one person and their spouse. Each unit is equipped with energy-star appliances: refrigerator, Stove, central heat and air, Washing Machine and Dryer. Some site locations offer a community building, available exclusively to residents and their guests. Each site is overseen by a rental manager and maintenance technician who is responsible for the overall operations and physical integrity of each unit and the property.

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

- Applicant must have a CDIB Card
- Applicant household must meet income guidelines
- Applicants must be elderly or near elderly (age 55 or older)
- Household members must pass a nationwide background check

Tenant rent in the Independent Elder Program is based on 15% of the gross adjusted income for the household.

Independent Elder Housing is currently offered at the following locations:

- Antlers
- Atoka
- Broken Bow
- Calera
- Coalgate
- Hartshorne
- Hugo
- Idabel
- Poteau
- Savanna
- Smithville
- Stigler
- Talihina
- Wilburton

Choctaw Nation

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CHOCTAWNATION.COM

Housing Authority

THE TIME HAS COME TO GATHER, CELEBRATE AND GIVE THANKS.

PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL THANKSGIVING MEALS FOR OUR ELDERLY

November 6, 2024 - Wednesday. Atoka Community Lunch 11:00 AM, Battiest Elder Lunch 11:30 AM, Wright City Community Lunch 12:00 PM.

November 7, 2024 - Thursday. Battiest Community Dinner 6:00 PM, Smithville Community Dinner 6:00 PM.

November 13, 2024 - Wednesday. Broken Bow Elder Lunch 11:00 AM, Coalgate Elder Lunch 12:00 PM, McAlester Elder Lunch 11:30 AM, Poteau Elder Lunch 12:00 PM, Stigler Community Lunch 11:30 AM.

November 14, 2024 - Thursday. Broken Bow Community Dinner 6:00 PM, Idabel Community Dinner 6:00 PM, Tuskahoma Community Dinner 6:00 PM.

November 19, 2024 - Tuesday. Durant Community Dinner 6:00 PM, Talihina Community Dinner 6:00 PM.

November 20, 2024 - Wednesday. Antlers Elder Lunch 12:00 PM, Crowder Elder Lunch 11:30 AM, Hugo Elder Lunch 11:30 AM, Spiro Community Lunch 11:30 AM, Wilburton Elder Lunch 11:00 AM.

November 21, 2024 - Thursday. McAlester Community Dinner 6:00 PM.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CANNED FOOD DRIVE OCTOBER 14 - NOVEMBER 15. ALL NON-PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS WELCOME. Donations go to local families, food banks and churches. For more information call 580.642.7205 or email CDTHOMPSON@CHOCTAWNATION.COM

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

Gary Batton Chief, Jack Austin Jr. Assistant Chief. The Official Monthly Publication of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Shauna Williams, Executive Director; Kristina Humenesky, Senior Director; Kellie Matherly, Content Development Director; Kendra Wall, Content Development Manager; Chris Jennings, News Reporter; Christian Toews, News Reporter.

The BISKINIK is printed each month as a service to Tribal members. The BISKINIK reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and reserves the right to edit submitted material which it finds inaccurate, profane, offensive or morally unacceptable. Copy may be edited for space, proper grammar and punctuation. Copy will be accepted in any readable form, but where possible, it is requested that material be typewritten and double-spaced.

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

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

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

NOTES & EVENTS

Cinema at the Center. This monthly series features a wide range of films designed around a fun, family-friendly theme. Join us in October for a screamin' good time or put Cinema at the Center on your Christmas list! In fact, why not add us to your calendar every month? We'd love to see you for movie night.

OILS Choctaw Nation Outreach Events. OILS will be available to provide answers to legal questions and take applications for legal services. OILS cannot provide advice if you currently have an attorney. We cannot provide advice for criminal matters involving the state district courts. OILS must follow federal poverty guidelines to provide services.

Battiest Choctaw Community Center - Oct. 2, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Antlers Choctaw Community Center - Oct. 9, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Broken Bow Choctaw Community Center - Oct. 17, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Idabel Choctaw Community Center - Oct. 18, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Spiro Choctaw Community Center - Oct. 23, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Wright City Choctaw Community Center - Oct. 30, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Celebrate Recovery Native Nations Night. "Hurts, habits or hang-ups, you will leave better than you came."

Join us on November 18, 2024, at 6 p.m. (a meal will be served at 5 p.m.) at the First Baptist Church-Student Worship Center 1st Avenue and Beech Street, Durant, Oklahoma.

This free event will feature native food, music and speakers. Families are welcome.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

For more information, call 580-924-3573 or email crdurant@fbcdurant.org.

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

Friday, November 1, 2024, 5 p.m.-9 p.m., Choctaw RV Park, 3650 Enterprise Dr, Durant, OK 74701

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

Family Heritage Crafts: 6:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. (Rope Braiding & Family History Activity)

Memorial Reflection & Ceremony: 7:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m. (Share stories about loved ones)

OKC Choctaw Tribal Alliance Indian Taco Sale. Please join us at the OK Choctaw Tribal Alliance (OCTA) Indian taco sale on Saturday, October 12, 2024, from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Our location will be at the American Legion Post 73/VFW Post 9969, located at 5000 SE 24th St, Del City, OK. Indian tacos will be sold for \$10.00 with complimentary tea. The Children's Language program will be selling bottled water and soda for \$1.00 each. Desserts and ala carte items available too. Indoor arts and crafts vendors will be available for your shopping enjoyment. Hope to see you there!



SHARE THE WARMTH COAT DRIVE & EXCHANGE OCT 14 - NOV 15. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT, 580.642.7205. Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA TRIBAL COUNCIL REGULAR SESSION AGENDA. September 14, 2024. 1. CALL TO ORDER, 2. OPENING PRAYER/FLAG SALUTE, 3. ROLL CALL, 4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES, 5. WELCOME GUESTS/SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS, 6. PUBLIC COMMENTS - None, 7. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND CHOCTAW NATION SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICERS, 8. ELECTION OF SPEAKER, SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE, SECRETARY, AND CHAPLAIN OF CHOCTAW NATION TRIBAL COUNCIL, 9. APPOINTMENT OF SERGEANT-AT-ARMS, PARLIAMENTARIAN, AND RECORDING SECRETARY OF CHOCTAW NATION TRIBAL COUNCIL, 10. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND CHAIRS, 11. NEW BUSINESS, 12. OTHER NEW BUSINESS, 13. OLD BUSINESS, 14. ADJOURNMENT, 15. CLOSING PRAYER. All votes passed unanimously.

Chahta Anumpa Aikkhvna Aktoba Language Lesson. Duration of time expressed with time adverbs. 'chikkosi' quickly or very soon, 'ahcheba' a little while, 'hopaki' a long time, 'shohbi' all day into evening. chikkosi: Hashuk vmo yvt chikkosi na vla tuk. The mowers arrived quickly. Holisso shali yvt chikkosi na holisso isht vla tuk. The mailman brought the mail early. ahchiba: Ohomba na ahchiba tuk. It rained for a good while. Okla towa washoha na ahchiba tuk. They played ball for a while. hopakichi: Vllvt nusi na hopakichi tuk. The child slept a long time. Hattak mvt anumpohon-li na hapakichi tuk. That man kept talking for a long time. shohbi: Vm ofi yvt ihimpa na shohbi tuk. My dog kept eating all day. Hushi homma makosh talohowa na shohbi tuk. That red bird kept singing until evening. www.choctawschool.com

OBITUARIES

Ruth Okemah Hancock. Ruth Okemah Hancock, 90, passed away Aug. 14, 2024. Ruth was born March 2, 1934, in Ft. Towson, Okla., to Rev. Edgar and Lucille Tims. She was preceded in death by her husband Gene; her parents; sister Emmaline Tims; and brother-in-law Joe BadMocassin. Ruth is survived by her children Karen Keady and spouse John, Eddie Hancock and spouse Rita, David Hancock and spouse Kellie, and Shawn Hancock and spouse Missy; 13 grandchildren; 10 great-grandchildren (with one on the way); and six great-great grandchildren; sisters Angeline Lewis and spouse Jack, Ann Robey and spouse Ray, Sue BadMocassin, and Verna Arterburn and spouse Ed. For the full obituary, please visit Dighton-Moore Funeral Service.



Pauletta Hernandez. Pauletta "Polly" Ward Hernandez, 60, passed away Aug. 21, 2024. Polly was born June 2, 1964, in Talihina, Okla., to Julius Carterby and Mary Lou Thierrey. She was preceded in death by her grandparents Jacob and Edna Carterby, and Linsey Alemohtubbi Ward; uncle Johnny Ward; aunts Mary Harris, Cealis Carterby, and Sealin Carterby; and sister Juliet Ward. Polly is survived by her spouse Gabriel Hernandez; children Vanessa Ward (Vaughn), Joseph Hernandez (Brittany), Rebecca Nolasco, Elizabeth Hernandez, and Joshua Hernandez (Alaina); grandchildren Tyanna, Jalen, Catherine, Jackson, Khalil, Antonio, Isabella, and Maddox; great-grandson Jeremiah; and nieces Jeneca Alvarez (Jose) and Angela Osborn. For the full obituary, please visit City of Oaks Cremation.



Florence Leona Johnson. Florence Leona (Wall) Johnson, 86, passed away Sept. 3, 2024. Florence was born March 31, 1938, in Stratford, Okla. She was preceded in death by her husband Murriel; sons Murriel Jr. and Danny; and granddaughters Shalanda and Heather. Florence is survived by sons Roy, Randall, Terry, and Clark and spouse Michelle; daughter Patty and spouse Oshiel; sister Annie; brother-in-law Harvey; 19 grandchildren; multiple great-grandchildren; and bonus daughters Tyke and Shawna. For the full obituary, please visit Criswell Funeral Home.



Jonell James. Jonell James, 55, passed away Aug. 25, 2024. Jonell was born June 12, 1969, to Jonas and Louise (Tonihka) James. She was preceded in death by her parents; aunts Shirley and Kathy; brothers Jeremiah, Daryl, and Jonathan; nephews Jeremiah and Tamiko; and niece Tanisha. Jonell is survived by her daughter Cara Nicholson and spouse Dylan Nicholson; siblings Joni, Iris, Johanson, Joyce, Donna, Lillie, Johanson Lee, Javier, Ireta, and Jacquelyn; many loving nieces and nephews; cousins; and a community of friends and patients whose lives she touched deeply. For the full obituary, please visit Bowser Family Funeral Home.



“Grambo” turns 100

Leatrice Carter - from beautician to bounty hunter

By Judy Allen

Not a lot of people have had careers that span from beautician to bounty hunter, but Leatrice Carter of Spiro can claim that story. A century of life for Mrs. Carter has been full of family love, adventure and a unique career. Born in 1924, she was named after a silent picture movie star, Leatrice Joy.

Most of her adult career was as a bounty hunter, then process server. She retired at the age of 96. If she hadn't suffered a heart attack, she would probably still be working at age 100!

Mrs. Carter's success as a bounty hunter earned her the nickname "Grambo."

Mrs. Carter said, "Back in the day, I decided I wanted to become a beautician. I went to beauty school and worked at a salon until 1970." She was living in Kansas during her beautician years. "My mother had moved down here (to Oklahoma). My mother had cattle and was getting to the point she couldn't throw feed out to them, and so on." Mrs. Carter moved back to Oklahoma. At this time, she was married to her fifth husband. She obtained work at a Sentinel Bonding in Ft. Smith. "I was the bounty hunter. I went after bond jumpers, and sometimes my life was in danger. I carried what they call a "slapper" (blackjack) and handcuffs." She also had a pearl-handled .38 Special.

Asked if she ran into many problems with the bond jumpers, Mrs. Carter replied, "Some tried to get a little "bronci", but I carried the difference!" She held up the slapper. "One time somebody got their hand on me, but that was it. I shoved them off. That surprised them, and they gave up. I had a belt you put on the bond-jumper to put (attach) the handcuffs. Sometimes they objected, but didn't object very long. You locked the belt on them and the handcuffs were behind them."

The "wanted" people Mrs. Carter collected were in a multi-state area including Oklahoma and Arkansas, Kansas and Colorado.

"I went wherever I had to go," she said. "When the judge wanted someone back for trial, I would go get them."

She said she worked for the bond office from age 56 until age 96. "I was doing process serving, where you served papers for the courts. I miss it. I miss getting out."

The sparkle in her eyes when telling about events she experienced are testimony to her enjoyment of the adventure and excitement of bounty hunting.

The Ft. Smith office Mrs. Carter worked from was a branch of the main bond office in Enid, Oklahoma.

Mrs. Carter was born at Tuskahoma to Florence Lawyer and Berry Bishop. She was sent to St. Agnes School in Antlers at four or five years old. "I was the youngest student there," she said. After St. Agnes, she went to school at Haskell in Lawrence, Kansas. Her chores at St. Agnes were mostly housekeeping in the dorms.

"Dust mopping under the beds, whatever needed done. We had a little cloth bag we kept our toothbrush and toothpaste in and we had to see that they were all hung up and kept straight."

Memories of activities included playing with paper dolls cut out of catalogues. "In my day, you made your own fun."

CNO unveils 'Eternal Heart' sculpture

8-foot-tall piece honors Choctaw-Irish connection

TVSHKA HOMMA, Okla. (Aug. 30, 2024) – Choctaw tribal members, tribal leaders, and dignitaries from Oklahoma and Ireland gathered at the Choctaw Capitol Grounds on Aug. 30 to unveil a new sculpture honoring the Choctaw-Irish connection. The sculpture was a joint commission, funded by the Government of Ireland and the Chahta Foundation.

Built by Choctaw Nation tribal member Samuel Stitt, the 8-foot-tall sculpture combines a Celtic trinity shape intertwined with a heart and is specifically placed facing toward Ireland.

The "Eternal Heart" sculpture was designed to honor the eternal bond forged between the Choctaw Nation and the people of Ireland.

"There is no beginning or end to the overall piece – thus, it is eternal," sculptor Sam Stitt said.

During a ceremony, Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton said, "We are grateful for the giving hearts of our Choctaw ancestors that brought us here today. We are excited to see what this eternal bond will bring to future generations of Choctaw and Irish, and we are extremely proud to call the people of Ireland our friends and kindred spirits."

Although separated by thousands of miles, these two nations are forever entwined because of an act of kindness that transcended time and distance almost two centuries ago.

"This memorial will be a permanent symbol of the enduring and meaningful friendship between our two nations, a relationship which began with an act of solidarity and extraordinary generosity during the darkest years of the Great Irish Famine," said Irish Minister of State Thomas Byrne T.D. "This unveiling is an important opportunity to reflect on the tragic events of our past and to remember the remarkable humanitarian efforts that



Photo by Judy Allen

Leatrice Carter aka "Grambo" worked as a bounty hunter and process server until the age of 96.

Mrs. Carter said that her mother had moved from Enid to Tuskahoma with grandparents in a covered wagon. "Not many people get to ride in a covered wagon!" Mrs. Carter's parents met at a Tuskahoma dance. Her father passed in 1984 and her mother passed in 1999 at the age of 94.

"My mother used to play at the Council House," said Mrs. Carter. "It wasn't active for the tribe then. We went down when they first started having meetings again and my mother said she thought the same curtains were hanging as when she was little!"

Mrs. Carter had two daughters with her first husband, Farrell Frank. Their names are Ann and Sandy.

She has lived through seventeen U.S. Presidents, starting with Calvin Coolidge. After him were Presidents Herbert Hoover, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden. "The first President I voted for was Roosevelt."

Asked about great inventions and innovations, Mrs. Carter replied, "Putting a man on the moon." She also said advances in technology amazed her.

Mrs. Carter doesn't have a specific favorite food, but is looking forward to her birthday party, where the planned menu will include fried fish and crapple cakes.

When asked how she would describe herself, Mrs. Carter said, "I am just a common person." She smiled and said, "I know at the doctor's office they ask if I feel safe. I tell them my family is afraid of me!" She laughed. "I drive a pretty tight ship, but I don't think I am mean."

"I am not exactly happy (for living so long), but I feel grateful that I am living to be with my family. We have five living generations and I am very grateful for that," said Mrs. Carter.

Her advice for future generations? "Get an education! It is the only way they are going to be able to make a living!" Her personal message to the younger generation is "Do whatever you can and do the best you can."



The new Eternal Heart sculpture, by artist Sam Stitt (pictured right), was at the 2024 Labor Day Festival. The monumental event honored the relationship between the Choctaw and Irish nations. Irish Minister of State Thomas Byrne T.D. (pictured left with Chief Batton) was in attendance.

forged the bonds of friendship between our nations."

In 1847, the Choctaw Nation, having recently endured the arduous journey known as the "Trail of tears," selflessly came together to raise over \$170 (equivalent to \$5,000 today) to support the Irish during the Great Famine. The Choctaws' heartfelt donation was sent to Midleton in County Cork, providing much-needed relief to the Irish.

Decades later, the people of Midleton discovered the true significance of this act of generosity. They realized that the Choctaws, at the time of their donation, were also rebuilding their society and government after their own painful displacement. This shared experience of resilience and compassion laid the foundation for a lasting friendship.

In 1995, then Irish President Mary Robinson visited the Choctaw Nation to express gratitude and rekindle the friendship between the two nations. During the visit, President Robinson was appointed "Honorary Chief of the Choctaw Nation." This historic visit marked the beginning of a renewed commitment to honor the bond forged by the Choctaws' selfless act. In 2017, the "Kindred Spirits" sculpture, designed by Irish artist Alex Pentek, was erected in Midleton, serving as a permanent reminder of the enduring connection between the Choctaw Nation and Ireland.

Over the years, the Irish and the Choctaws have continued to honor this sacred bond through various acts of generosity. In 2020, amidst the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Irish people once again demonstrated their unwavering support by providing aid to Native American tribes severely impacted by the crisis.

"It is a great honor to have a hand in exemplifying the Choctaw-Irish connection through my art," said Samuel Stitt. "The Choctaw culture of giving and caring for others is passed down to each generation. The 'Eternal Heart' is an artistic interpretation of how the Irish people and Choctaw Nation will forever be connected by that human characteristic of compassion – one people for another."

The unveiling of the "Eternal Heart" sculpture serves as a reminder of the power of compassion and solidarity and stands as a testament to the enduring friendship between the Choctaw Nation and people of Ireland.

Phillips earns doctorate from SBU

Kerry and Judy Phillips would like to announce the graduation of their daughter Abigail Phillips from Southwest Baptist University with a Doctorate of Physical Therapy on May 3, 2024.

Abigail is a graduate of Whitesboro High School and Southeastern Oklahoma State University.

"We would like to thank the Choctaw Nation for their support." - The Phillips Family



Anderson earns Master's from UNT

Morgan Anderson graduated in May with a Master's in Business Administration, majoring in Human Resources and Organizational Behavior, from the University of North Texas.

Morgan has worked full-time for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma since 2020. Morgan is the granddaughter of Duane and Jean Anderson. She is the daughter of Shawn and Debbie Anderson and the sister of Lauren Anderson.

She would like to thank the Choctaw Nation and her work family for supporting her throughout her higher education journey.



Álvarez earns Master's degree from AU

Jacob Álvarez completed a master's degree in International Affairs: Comparative and Regional Studies from American University in Washington, DC, in August.

He specialized in Governance & Democracy and the Americas. Álvarez is immensely grateful for the support given to him by the Choctaw Nation and for having a greater tribal community to share his successes with.

"This achievement is the culmination of our ancestors' perseverance. I hope that all Choctaws feel that they can also reach any goal they set their minds to. I am lucky to be Choctaw."

Gilreath named Whataburger Rising Star

Jordan Gilreath, 15, was selected as a Whataburger Rising Star and was presented at a Texas Rangers baseball game on August 30, 2024.

She is a two-time alumnus of the MLB's Elite Development Invitational. The MLB chooses girls from a skills video selection process, then flies them to the Jackie Robinson Complex in Vero Beach, Florida.

Jordan led her baseball and softball team to the junior division championships at the Texas Rangers Youth Academy. Her softball team won the championship, and her baseball finished as runner-up.

"She is a tushka tek and we are so proud of her," said her mother, Tamara Gilreath.



Riopelle turns 1

"Happy 1st Birthday to Sophie Ann Margaux Riopelle. We are so lucky to have such an amazing daughter in our lives. You are the best little sister ever and we are so excited to see you grow!"

Love,
Mom, Dad and Alexandre



477 Program earns NINAETC award

DURANT, Okla. -Members of The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's 477 Program attended The 44th National Indian and Native American Employment & Training Conference (NINAETC) in Orlando, Fla., in May 2024. The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma was honored to attend training on Public Law 102-477 and to have received the DWD Specialist Award for program of the year! The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's 477 Program received this Grantee Award for its exceptional leadership and dedication to those within the tribal community. "Yakoke chito" to The U.S. Department of the Interior for recognizing the efforts of this team and the impact this team makes within The CNO Reservation Area. The 477 Program extends another "yakoke" to Ida Doyle of The Osage Nation and The U.S. Department of the Interior's Division of Workforce Development for supporting this staff & pouring into Tribes. This collaboration has significantly improved deliverable services to Tribal Members.

"The Choctaw Nation 477 Program prides itself on providing a "one-stop" career shop whose main objective is to integrate employment, training, education, supportive services, and related services that improve the availability, affordability, quality, and coordination of childcare programs. The dedicated team is focused on identifying and resolving barriers that participants may face in their pursuit of employment, training, and education endeavors. We have seen less dependency on public assistance programs, reduction of unemployment rates among tribal members and other federally recognized tribal members residing in the CNO Reservation Area," said Education/Careers Senior Director Robin Counce. "Some of Choctaw Nation 477 Program's services are Adult employment assistance and supportive services that lead to sustainable employment; Youth Employment Services, which include work experiences, job shadowing, internships, leadership development and financial literacy; financial assistance for quality career training and assistance to obtain quality childcare. The team is dedicated to the success and self-sufficiency of tribal members as well as promoting tribal sovereignty."

Senior Program Manager Ginger Crawford added, "None of this would have been possible without the support of Chief Gary Batton, Assistant Chief Jack Austin, Jr., Tribal Council and the entire 477 Program Staff and their willingness to go above and beyond."

Those seeking assistance in any of these areas may apply for Employment Training Services, Youth Employment Services, and/or Child Care Assistance in the Chahta Achvfa Member Portal. For additional information, please visit <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/477/>.



YAB LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE AND 20TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Join us in celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB)! Over the past 20 years, YAB has empowered students to inspire positive change through servant leadership. Hear from YAB Alumni and Choctaw Nation Leadership as we celebrate this incredible achievement.

NOVEMBER 9, 2024 | 9:00 AM | TVSHKA HOMMA



Choctaw Nation
Youth Advisory Board

20
YEARS

ITI FABVSSA

The Carter Hospital (Part 1)

As tuberculosis became the leading cause of death in the United States during the turn of the twentieth century, the Office of Indian Affairs began to pay increasing attention to health concerns, finding staggeringly high rates of morbidity and mortality due to the disease among the tribes (Godfrey 2017, also see Murphy 1910). Whole Native families were dying from tuberculosis as many individuals stayed sick for extended periods of time. On October 14, 1911, the Choctaw Nation General Council passed an act, providing that a sanatorium be created for Choctaw and Chickasaw tuberculosis patients. The bill was signed by G.W. Dukes, President of the Senate, and Osborne Anderson, Recording Secretary. The House passed the bill the same day and was immediately signed by Victor M. Locke, Principal Chief. On May 7, 1912, the U.S. Senate passed an act (concurring by the U.S. House of Representatives on May 8, 1912) authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to set aside funds to purchase land for the sanatorium not to exceed four sections of unallotted tribal lands.

Tuberculosis (TB) is an infectious disease caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* that usually affects the lungs but can also affect other parts of the body. Typical symptoms of TB include chronic cough with mucus containing blood, fever, night sweats, and weight loss. Tuberculosis called “Hichushi-ililli” in Choctaw, was also commonly referred to as consumption or the “Great White Plague,” due to the progressive deterioration or wasting condition of the sufferer’s overall health and extreme anemic pallor or paleness of those afflicted (Frith 2014: 32). TB is highly contagious and spreads through the air from person to person.

Following the discovery of the tubercule bacillum – bacteria that causes tuberculosis – in 1882, the United States launched several massive health campaigns to educate the public on tuberculosis prevention and treatment. During the early twentieth century, educational pamphlets were widely advertised in local newspapers, including the Talihina Democrat, which emphasized the disease’s contagious nature and recommended preventative measures such as sleeping in the open air (Talihina Democrat, July 29, 1910:3). As the annual financial cost of the disease rose dramatically across the United States, the Red Cross partnered with the National Tuberculosis Association to sell Christmas mail stamps to help fund educational outreach and treatment. In 1912, the United States Public Health Service examined the prevalence of tuberculosis and other infectious diseases on reservations and boarding schools and found several factors contributing to the spread of tuberculosis, including unsanitary conditions, overcrowding, and poor food (Commissioner of Indian Affairs 1912: 19-21). During the early twentieth century, Choctaws and Chickasaws were still largely suffering from the lingering and continued effects of Removal and the disruption to their communities because of allotment. According to Swanton (2001 [1931]: 238), tuberculosis became especially rampant among the Choctaw community when people moved from traditional homes to poorly ventilated log cabins that were sealed with chinking.

Sanatoria were developed in the mid-nineteenth century to treat TB. These were specialized hospitals where persons with TB were sent to be cured with the aid of fresh air, nutritious food, and exercise in the form of “mountain walks.” Patients spent part of the day reclined outside on wide sun porches taking in the fresh air. This method, called “the rest cure,” was sometimes beneficial for patients with minimal disease, but many with severe infection never recovered.

Situated at the foot of the Buffalo and Winding Stair Mountains, approximately three and a half miles northwest of the town of Talihina, a more idyllic place for a sanatorium in the eastern portion of the state could not be found. Nestled among the tall pines, the future site of the Choctaw-Chickasaw Hospital was selected for its picturesque location as well as its proximity to several large springs (Choctaw Herald, April 1, 1915: 2, also see Talihina Tribune, November 24, 1916: 1). Gabe E. Parker, Superintendent of the Five Civilized Tribes (1915-1921) and an enrolled Choctaw, approved an expenditure of \$50,000 for the hospital to serve the two tribes and began advertising in the spring of 1915 for bids to construct a frame hospital building (Daily Ardmoreite, April 20, 1915: 3). The contract to construct the original sanatorium and related buildings was awarded to Horton Smith (Des Moines Register, May 29, 1915: 7). The initial appropriation was secured, and the actual work began that year. Improvements included a frame hospital, powerhouse, water, sewer, and lighting systems at a total cost of \$48,954. The property was placed in the care of W.M. Donner, who, under the Indian Department (which later became the Bureau of Indian Affairs), supervised various stages in the hospital’s construction. The institution was officially named the Carter Sanatorium. With 10 years of experience in government work, Special Physician W. E. Van Cleave was placed in charge of the sanatorium to help finalize and set up the hospital. Ten to twelve full-time personnel were anticipated. Construction of a road from Talihina to the hospital, a laundry building, and a barn were also completed.

During the hospital’s dedication banquet, Parker declared the newly completed sanatorium “the only one exclusively for Indian patients in the world” (Muskogee County Democrat, November 16, 1916). G.W. Dukes also spoke at the dedication, asserting the great need for the institution among the Choctaws and Chickasaws who were rapidly suffering and dying from the disease with little to no medical attention (Talihina Tribune, November 24, 1916: 1).

Dr. Van Cleave was temporarily relieved in July 1917 by Dr. Walter S. Stevens but returned to manage the facility shortly thereafter. The Carter Hospital, built to accommodate about 60 patients, officially opened on November 17, 1916. Its first patient was Miss Ida James of Whitesboro (Talihina Tribune, November 10, 1916: 1). By the following year, the hospital had 20 patients, mostly youth.

William H. Ketchum, a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners and a Catholic missionary, sent several updates to the Hon. George Vaux, Jr., Chairman of the Board of Indian Commissioners, during and after the hospital’s construction, strongly advocating for additional resources and funds. Plans were made to erect a tent colony in the neighborhood to treat patients while the building was being equipped (Muskogee Times Democrat, March 14, 1916: 3).



A view of the Carter Hospital, date unknown. Courtesy of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Scan the QR code to view a pamphlet on TB printed in English and Choctaw from 1917.

In 1917, Ketchum reported additional plans to construct cottages for older patients and hospital staff. He also urged the Commission to appoint a Choctaw official who could act as an interpreter for the physicians and nurses to help the patients feel more at home, which would hopefully encourage them to stay for the duration of their treatment. Ketchum envisioned the hospital less as a treatment facility and more as a “colony,” or self-contained village, so he advocated for provisions to improve the well-being of the patients, such as religious services and open-air classes for the children. Ketchum also participated in a vigorous educational campaign, which took the form of local health drives and community outreach. At Ketchum’s insistence, the Department of the Interior’s Office of Indian Affairs, printed an informational pamphlet on tuberculosis in the Choctaw language in 1917. The pamphlet explained the transmission of the disease, encouraged clean and sanitary living conditions, and included instructions on how to use and dispose of sputum or spit cups (Department of the Interior Office of Indian Affairs 1917).

Regular newspaper updates from the hospital included the comings and goings of visitors and patients and the procurement of a dedicated vehicle for the sanatorium. Life at the sanatorium followed a regular schedule. The Delphian Club entertained at the Sanatorium and classes began to be taught to the younger patients (Talihina American, May 17, 1918: 1, also see July 2, 1920: 8). As the demand for hospital beds increased, the complex grew to include a superintendent’s cottage, employee housing, a commissary, a school, and a working farm that included a dairy barn, a hog shed, cow shed, poultry house, hay storage, and feed storage.

By 1921, there were still no Choctaws or Chickasaws on staff at the hospital. The facilities were also frequently overcrowded and being used to treat non-TB patients without any separation. In 1928, the Institute for Government Research released the Meriam Report, which severely criticized the Department of the Interior’s implementation of the Dawes Act and subsequent healthcare services, finding a general lack of personnel, equipment, management, and design. Following the inauguration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, Indian policy changed significantly in place of governmental policies aimed toward assimilation and reformist policies centered on the preservation and improvement of Indian health conditions. With additional funding opportunities made available through New Deal public works programs, improvements to the facilities at Talihina began immediately (Godfrey 2017: 7). By the end of 1935, plans were being made to construct a 225-bed addition on the campus at an estimated cost of \$862,500. In 1939, the Carter Hospital was converted into an employee’s building. However, the building is no longer standing. Today, the oldest standing building on the property is the Van Cleave’s cabin, built in 1921, which is still in use. Next month’s Iti Fabvssa article will discuss the history of the Talihina Indian Hospital and the development of the Choctaw Nation Healthcare System.

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CNHSA presented Oklahoma Quality Award

DURANT, Okla. – Choctaw Nation Health Services Association (CNHSA) was one of two organizations awarded the prestigious Oklahoma Quality Foundation (OQF) State Quality Award.

The award recognizes organizations dedicated to achieving performance excellence using the Baldrige Excellence Framework, a proven system helping organizations fulfill their missions, enhance results, and increase competitiveness.

“This year’s distinguished awardees embody the highest standards of quality and innovation in their contributions to Oklahoma,” said Lt. Governor Matt Pinnell. “We applaud their efforts to consistently improve their organizations and serve as role models to others.”

“The award confirms everything we’ve built and worked towards for our tribal

members,” echoes Gary Batton, Chief of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. “We strive to provide the best quality rural healthcare in America and we have succeeded in accomplishing that.”

Heath Wright, OQF Executive Director, added, “The Baldrige Framework is a time-tested model for organizational excellence, guiding countless organizations toward sustainable success. Our Oklahoma Quality Summit provides a platform to celebrate those who have reached organizational excellence while offering valuable training and peer learning opportunities for those committed to continuous improvement.”

CNHSA received a Level 5 Milestone Oklahoma State Quality Award.

This highest honor recognizes organizations that have established and effectively implemented their missions, visions, and values, achieving nationally benchmarked outcomes.

Additionally, they are celebrated for outstanding communication and strategic planning, the organization has become a leader in patient-centered care and with patient retention rates significantly above industry norms and top-tier inpatient satisfaction.

Choctaw Nation recognized on Forbes List of Best Employers by State

DURANT, Okla. (September 5, 2024) – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) has been recognized on Forbes List of Best Employers by State for 2024. CNO is ranked at number 2 of 35 organizations in Oklahoma.

“The only way to grow strong businesses and provide exceptional services is through hiring and retaining the best people. This requires us to provide an excellent work environment where people feel valued and respected,” Chief Gary Batton said. “We appreciate the recognition from Forbes because it is based on the feedback from our people.”

According to Forbes, responses were received from all 50 states and then tallied and incorporated into a scoring system, along with survey data from the past three years. Companies that received the highest scores in each state made the list, with each state ranking between three and 101 employers,



depending on its size and the number of responses received. A total of 1,294 organizations landed on the list of America’s Best-In-State Employers 2024.

As one of the largest employers in Oklahoma, with more than 12,000 associates, the Choctaw Nation plays a vital role in the state’s economy and has established itself as a leading employer in the state. The recognition from Forbes further strengthens CNO’s position as a key contributor to the region’s workforce and overall growth.

RUN TO HONOR VETERANS
 NOVEMBER 2, 2024

Join us to celebrate veterans at the annual Run to Honor Veterans event. You can walk or run a 1 mile, 5K, 15K or 15K relay course. On-site registration is at 8:00 am and the races start at 10:00 am.

QR codes for registration: PACE members sign up through PACE, Non-PACE members can download the registration form.

Choctaw Nation Warrior Wellness

OKHVTA CHITO OKHOATALI
 CHOCTAW AND FRENCH TRANSATLANTIC LEGACIES

EXHIBIT NOW OPEN
 JULY 6 - NOVEMBER 30

Explore the continued relationship between the Choctaw Nation and France through a collaborative exhibit featuring items from the eighteenth century. Step into the Choctaw world of early European trade and how the relationship with France has continued to modern day.

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER
 CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM

This exhibit was produced with the generous collaboration of the Musée du quai Branly - Jacques Chirac and the University of South Alabama Archaeology Museum.

HEAD START
 NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Providing educational, health and family services for eligible children and families, including children with special needs.

Available to all children who will be 3 or 4 years old by September 1, 2024.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL, 580.924.8280

QR code: Scan to learn more about the program.

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

Horseshoes



Youth Singles

First Place: Braxton Bacon Second Place: Tristan Babb Third Place: Tytan Ellis



Women's Singles

First Place: Nakisha Bohanan Second Place: Minoka Forcelle Third Place: Patricia Bohanan



Men's Singles

First Place: Mike Mings Second Place: Belvin Frazier and Third Place: Dewight Cubit



Youth Ringer

Champion: Tristan Babb



Women's Ringer

Champion: Kisha Bohanan



Men's Ringer

Champion: Mike Mings



Men's Doubles

First Place: Mike Mings and Nicky Slabaugh Second Place: Dewight Cubit and Ellis Taylor



Women's Doubles

First Place: Kisha Bohanan and Stephanie Bohanan Second Place: Kelsie Eason and Patricia Bohanan

Quilt Show

Hand Stitch

First Place: Susan Grisham "Buffalo"
Second Place: Susan Grisham "Head Dress"

Machine Stitch

First Place: Lois Thomas "Memory"
Second Place: Brandi O'Neal "Star"
Third Place: Rebecca Mizell "Free Hand" and Eva Jean Felihkatubbee "Log Cabin"

Machine & Hand Stitch

First Place: Wilma Nail "Indian Doll"
Second Place: Lois Thomas "Green & Yellow Quilt"
Third Place: Nona Humphreys "Black N. Star"

Peoples Choice

Wilma Nail "Indian Doll"
Brandi O'Neal "Star"
Lois Thomas "Memory"



First Place and People's Choice, Wilma Nail



First Place and People's Choice, Lois Thomas



Brandi O'Neal, People's Choice

Dominoes & Checkers



Dominoes

First Place: Kim Battiest
Second Place: Archey Crosby



Checkers

First Place: Jason Baker
Second Place: Quint Hodges (not pictured)



Even though it's air conditioned, dominoes and checkers are two of the hottest competitions at Labor Day.

CNO selected for Industry Leader Award by National Safety Council

DURANT, Okla. (August 10, 2024) – The Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) is one of only 35 organizations in the U.S. selected by the National Safety Council to receive a 2024 Industry Leader Award for excellent safety performance. Winners were chosen for this special recognition based on their safety performance and represent the top 5% of National Safety Council member companies.

The National Safety Council chooses the winners each year based on the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code, lowest total incidence rate and employee work hours.

"This is a great example of exercising our sovereignty by self-regulation and implementation of a strong safety program," Brian Danker, Legal & Compliance Senior Executive Officer says. "This recognition highlights that when our associates come to work, they and their families know they will be protected and are very unlikely to suffer any debilitating injury requiring extensive time-off from work. It's another great reason why we are an 'Employer of Choice.'"

In making the announcement of this year's winners of this prestigious honor, National Safety Council Director of Membership Kristin Witters said, "This year's winners exemplify what it means to protect employees from death and injury at work by making safety a top priority."

"We are proud and honored to be recognized as one of the safest places to work in the U.S.," says Choctaw Nation Occupational Safety and Health (CNOSH) Senior Director Andreasen Matson, "But our biggest reward is seeing every associate go home to their families every day after another safe work shift at the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma."

VISIT CHAHTA CONNECT

Make Chahta Connect your go-to resource for finding Internet Service Providers (ISPs) on the Choctaw reservation in Southeast Oklahoma. Whether you're looking to get connected or upgrade your service, Chahta Connect has you covered.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT: CHAHTACONNECT.COM

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

IS YOUR HOME OLDER THAN 1978? YOU SHOULD GET IT TESTED FOR LEAD!

Contact Choctaw Nation Public Health for a free in-home lead test!

SCAN QR CODE TO LEARN MORE!

Choctaw Nation Public Health

CHOCTAW NATION FOOD DISTRIBUTION

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

October 2024
All markets open weekdays, October 1-29
Closed: October 14, 30 & 31
Nutrition Ed & Food Programs subject to cancellation
Participants can request a calendar at their location.

ANTLERS 400 S.W. "O" ST., 580-298-6443
FOOD DEMO OCTOBER 8

BROKEN BOW 109 Chahta Rd., 580-584-2842
FOOD DEMO OCTOBER 17

DURANT 2352 Big Lots Pkwy., 580-924-7773
FOOD DEMO OCTOBER 24

MCALESTER 3244 Afullota Hina, 918-420-5716
FOOD DEMO OCTOBER 10

POTEAU 106 B St., 918-649-0431
FOOD DEMO OCTOBER 22

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

FOOD DISTRIBUTION PARTICIPANTS MUST REPORT HOUSEHOLD CHANGES

Household changes may affect your eligibility for the Food Distribution Program.

Please report any household changes immediately to your Food Distribution pickup site.

- Change in household size
- Increase in gross monthly income of more than \$100
- Change in residence and/or address
- Household no longer paying for shelter (house payment, rent, etc.)
- Household no longer paying for utilities (electric, gas, water)
- Change in receipt of child support

Failure to report changes may result in ineligibility and/or a claim against your household for over-issued food items.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT CHOCTAWNATION.COM/FOOD-DISTRIBUTION

Choctaw Nation Food Distribution

CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER MEMBERSHIP

BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER TODAY!

Your annual membership helps support the preservation of Choctaw culture. Membership benefits include:

Complimentary admission to the Cultural Center, advance notice of special events and exhibits, invitations to members only events, discounts at Hvshi Gift Store and much more!

SCAN THE QR CODE OR VISIT CHOCTAWCULTURALCENTER.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION

Social Dancing



Photos by Kendra Germany-Wall

A group of young boys show off their Chahta pride at Labor Day during social dancing on the Capitol Lawn.



Dancers have fun during the crowd favorite Snake Dance.



Social dancing at Labor Day is a way for tribal members and visitors to participate in Choctaw traditions.



Dancers show off their traditional Choctaw dresses with a modern spin.

Choctaw Village



Georgia Harjo demonstrates textile weaving at the Choctaw Village.



Ramsey Williston demonstrates how to make a stickball ball at the Choctaw Village.



Photos by Chris Jennings

Laura Huskey, left, helps Georgia Harjo on a piece of textile in the demonstration booth.



Jessa Taylor lifts the hat to correctly guess where the prize is hidden as her brother, Jacob, inspects during the hat game.



Singers perform Choctaw hymns in the Choctaw Village. The village is a place for visitors to learn about Chahta traditions.

Bowshoot

Youth Boys 9-14
 First Place, Tucker Kitchel
 Second Place, Jack Frazin
 Third Place, Matthias Bohanan

Youth Girls 9-14
 First Place, Harper Frazin
 Second Place, Katrina Bohanan
 Third Place, Mi'kel Osceola

Youth Boys 14-17
 First Place, Bryson Jones
 Second Place, Logan Taylor
 Third Place, Rylan Flowers

Youth Girls 14-17
 First Place, Mia Reich

Women 18-34
 First Place, Abbie Wilson
 Second Place, Kelbie Kennedy

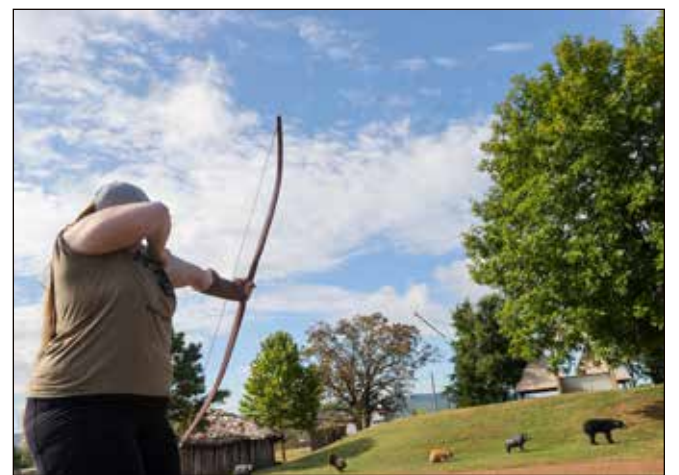


Photos by Kellie Matherly, Christian Toews and Gennavie Tom

Third Place, Macy Bohanan

Men 18-34
 First Place, Jordan Underwood
 Second Place, Jose Gonzalez
 Third Place, Trever Baisley

35+
 First Place, Justin Jackson
 Second Place, Chester Cowen



HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM APPLICATION NOW OPEN

The application for the 2024 Fall semester is now open. The deadline to apply is October 1, 2024.



Scan to learn more about the program.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO APPLY NOW AT [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/HIGHER-EDUCATION/](https://choctawnation.com/services/higher-education/)

Choctaw Nation Higher Education Program

2024 HOLIDAY FOOD VOUCHERS

Available for low-income Choctaw families living within the Choctaw Nation Reservation. Eligible applicants will receive one voucher per household.

DEADLINES TO APPLY:
 Thanksgiving and Christmas - October 1, 2024 - October 26, 2024
 Christmas Only - October 27, 2024 - November 23, 2024

APPLY AT [CHOHTAACHVFFA.CHOCTAWNATION.COM](https://chohtaachvffa.choctawnation.com)
 CHOCTAW NATION OUTREACH SERVICES 800-522-6170

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



2024 Art Show Winners

DURANT, Okla. – Sue Folsom’s beaded medallion “The Chahta Story” was named Best of Show at the 19th Annual Choctaw Art Show. A total of 28 winners were selected among the 94 juried pieces in competition.

Always a popular feature of the Choctaw Labor Day Festival at Tvshka Homma, in 2024 the show was held in its entirety for the first time at the Choctaw Cultural Center, 1919 Hina Hanta Way in Durant.

The exhibit was on display to the public August 19-31. The winners were announced August 24 at a private reception.

First, second, third and honorable mention places were named in each category, with four additional winners being named in special categories.

2024 Choctaw Art Show Winners

Best of Show

- “The Chahta Story” Sue Folsom
- Himmak Pila “Future” Award
- “Simple Native Beauty” Teri Scroggins
- Okla’s Choice (People’s Choice)
- “Snowy Footprints and a Lost Blanket” Tiffany Baker

Choctaw Heritage Award

- “Twined Garment” Jennifer Byram

Basketry

- First Place: “Large Heart Basket” Lizabeth Mitchell
- Second Place: “Finding Faith in Choctaw Weaving” Susan Locke Charlesworth
- Third Place: “Gathering Basket” Lizabeth Mitchell
- Honorable Mention: “Must Be Carried” Deborah Baker

Beadwork

- First Place: “Choctaw Luksi” Chrischelle Baker

- Second Place: “Indian Paintbrush” Gaila Monique Jackson
- Third Place: “Awareness For Our People” Gaila Monique Jackson
- Honorable Mention: “Cedar Collar” Yasmine Del Rosario

Drawing/Painting

- First Place: “Honoring Terry” Jane Semple Umsted
- Second Place: “A Boy, a Horse and His Dog” Brent Cherry
- Third Place: “Ishtaboli” Candace Stanholtzer
- Honorable Mention: “Summer Harvest” Jane Semple Umsted

Graphics/Photography

- First Place: “Imponnah” Sam Stitt
- Second Place: “Chahta Villa Tek” Meggan Taylor
- Third Place: “Ohoyo Hlampko” Courtney Sisneros
- Honorable Mention: “Pashi Falaya” Kenzie Belcheff

Textile Art

- First Place: “Twined Garment” Jennifer Byram
- Second Place: “Simple Native Beauty” Teri Scroggins
- Third Place: “Jennifer” Megan Baker
- Honorable Mention: “Stick & Balls Remixed” Megan Baker

Diversified Art

- First Place: “Mahli Chito” Ross Ridge
- Second Place: “Graduation Bag” Margaret Riley Santhanam
- Third Place: “Ohoyo Osh Chishba” Gregg Standridge
- Honorable Mention: “Choctaw Nation” Joel Long



Winners of the 19th Annual Choctaw Art Show. 94 pieces were exhibited August 19-31 at the Choctaw Cultural Center.



Choctaw Nation Photos
“The Chahta Story” by Sue Folsom, Best of Show, 2024

Worship Service



CHAHTAPRENEUR
CHRISTMAS CATALOG

VIEW THE DIGITAL CATALOG AT
CHOCTAWSMALLBUSINESS.COM

Choctaw Nation Small Business Development

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Youth Employment Services (YES) is offering exciting paid employment opportunities for youth aged 16-21 in the Choctaw Nation Reservation service area. YES is transitioning from a traditional 5-week summer work experience to a year-round employment opportunity with Project Auatvchi and Project Toksvli, allowing participants to work up to 200 hours at any time of the year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
CHOCTAWNATION.COM/SERVICES/YOUTH-EMPLOYMENT-SERVICES/

Choctaw Nation 477 Program

2024 TOY DRIVE

NOVEMBER 1 - 22

Donate new, in-package toys (minimum \$5 value) and earn entries into a prize drawing! Every toy donated gives you an extra chance to win.

Suggested items include:

- Developmental toys
- Sports gear
- Lego blocks
- Baby dolls
- Gift cards for older kids

Drop off at your local Wellness Center. Prizes vary by location.

Help make the holidays brighter for children in need!

Choctaw Nation Wellness Center

CANNED FOOD DRIVE 2024

OCTOBER 21 - NOVEMBER 22

MEMBERS WHO BRING 5 CANNED FOOD AND/OR NON-PERISHABLE ITEMS WILL BE ENTERED INTO A DRAWING

PRIZES VARY PER FACILITY | EVERY 5 ITEMS IS AN EXTRA ENTRY

ACCEPTABLE ITEMS

- Mac & Cheese
- Crackers
- Peanut Butter
- Canned pasta
- Rice
- Canned Meat
- Canned vegetables
- Canned Fruit
- Canned Beans

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT YOUR LOCAL CHOCTAW NATION WELLNESS CENTER

Choctaw Nation Wellness Center CHOCTAWNATION.COM

2024 WINTER APPAREL DRIVE

HELP KEEP OUR COMMUNITY WARM

The Choctaw Nation is hosting its annual Winter Apparel Drive from November 1 to 22, 2024. The drive is an opportunity for community members to contribute to those in need by donating new winter items, including jackets, blankets, socks, gloves, beanies and scarves.

Participants will earn entries into a prize drawing for each item donated, with prizes varying by facility. One entry is awarded for each jacket or blanket donated, and an additional entry is given for every five small items (such as socks, gloves, beanies or scarves).

All donations must be new and can be dropped off at any Choctaw Nation Wellness Center.

For more information, please visit your local Wellness Center.

Choctaw Nation Wellness Center

Fittest Choctaw



Women's Legend Division
First Place: Linna Walthal



Men's Open Division
First Place: Jordan Benson
Second Place: Joshua Benson
Third Place: Cody Hicks



Women's Open Division
First Place: Jalena Walker
Second Place: Catie Hamilton
Third Place: Taylor Cox



Teen Division
First Place: Skyler Beasley
Second Place: Malachi May-tubby (not pictured)
Third Place: Wyatt Harjo



Women's Master division:
Amanda Marzek first place
Danielle Brooks second place and Teresa Gardner, third place.



Masters Division
First Place: Paul Crow
Second Place: Trey Daniel
Third Place: Bobby Williams



Chief Gary Batton competes in the Fittest Warrior competition at the 2024 Labor Day Festival.



Legend Division
First Place: Anthony Dillard
Second Place: Gary Batton (not pictured)
Third Place(tie): Byron Smith and Wayne Moore



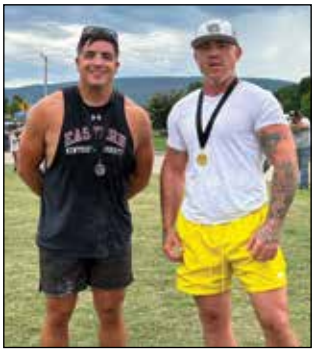
Chief Batton's Youth Fitness Challenge



Photos by Shelia Kirven

Temperatures were sizzling on Friday afternoon during the Youth Fitness Competition during the Labor Day Festival, but that didn't stop many kids from turning out and showing off their skills. Dodgeball and tug-of-war were just two of the competitions happening. Each child received a medal for their participation.

Tough Tough



Men's Division
Silver: Dylan Pingleton
Gold: Micah Abney



Fighting Hearts
Orion Martinez and Ruby Murphy



Skyler Jurey pushes the ATV across the line during the Tough Tough event.



Women's Division
Gold: Catie Hamilton
Silver: Jamie Williams



Ruby Murphy tries to flip the tire during the Tough Tough event.



Last year's Tough Tough champion, Matt Harjo, tries to flip the 600lb tire during the 2024 event.

Chair Volleyball

Cornhole



Photos by Cale Russell

First Place: Jody Browning and Mikey Melton
Second Place: Landon Miles and Aaron Squirrel
Third place: Trey Albert and Conner Thompson



Choctaw Nation Photos

District 2 sweeps elder chair volleyball, with Bethel/Battiest (above) winning first place and Broken Bow (below) winning second place.



First Place: Ellis Taylor and Max Ramirez
Second Place: Joe Terrell and Mike Mings
Third Place: Brian Williams and Wayne Baker



WIC OFFICE LOCATIONS

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

Choctaw Nation Health Services

Choctaw Nation Vocational Rehabilitation

October 2	Crowder	By Appointment
October 4	Wright City	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
October 8	Talihina	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
October 9	Antlers	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
October 11	Atoka	8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
October 11	Coalgate	12:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
October 15	Poteau	11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
October 16	McAlester	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
October 18	Idabel	10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
October 22	Wilburton	10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
October 25	Broken Bow	10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.
October 30	Stigler	By Appointment

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

Ishtaboli

Stickball
Little Brother of War



Photos by Christian Toews



Photos by Kendra Germany-Wall

Above: Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Tvshka Homma Ohoyo's were runners up in the Women's 2024 Choctaw Nation Labor Day Stickball Tournament.

Right: Tvshka Homma Ohoyo's coach, Jared Tom gives a pep talk after the September 1 game.

Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

2024 Men's Choctaw Nation Labor Day Stickball Tournament MVP, Bok Cito's Brandon Jimmie.

Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

2024 Women's Choctaw Nation Labor Day Stickball Tournament MVP, Rogue's Denise Denson.



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

Rogue, 2024 Women's Choctaw Nation Labor Day Stickball Tournament Champions.



Photo by Kendra Germany-Wall

Bok Cito, 2024 Men's Choctaw Nation Labor Day Stickball Tournament Champions.

Stickball Exhibition Games



Photos by Kendra Germany-Wall

Young stickball players take part in the Annual Labor Day Stickball Exhibition on Sunday, September 1.





Buffalo tours allow visitors to get up close and personal with this native species during the Labor Day Festival. Photo by Christian Toews



A stickball athlete walks through the carnival. Photo by Christian Toews



A Choctaw Nation sunset backdrops a softball game. Photo by Christian Toews



A festival attendee takes advantage of the cooler temps after a brief rain to get some Labor Day fair food. Photo by Christian Toews



For many, the carnival rides are a major attraction at the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival. Photo by Christian Toews



Faith Bryant, Chloey Frazier, Blake Thompson and Carter Shoecraft enjoy a ride at the carnival on Saturday night. Photo by Christian Toews



Carnival sounds permeate the air as attendees walk along the rows carefully deciding what to try next. Photo by Christian Toews



Ezekiel Black has a lot of fun cheering on his team during the stickball tournament. Photo by Christian Toews



Logan Taylor (left) and Roman Land (right) learn about the plants being grown in the greenhouse at Tvshka Homma from Jacqueline Putman (middle). Photo by Christian Toews



83-year-old Leonard Monroe runs the 5K. Photo by Christian Toews



The Close, fronted by Choctaw tribal member Lori Rowton, performs before Saturday night's concert. Photo by Rodolphe Foucher



Ripp Bailey enjoys playing the rubber duck carnival game. Photo by Christian Toews



Buffalo looking majestic on one of the Buffalo Tours. Photo by Christian Toews



Choctaw associate volunteers pose for a photo during their shift in the cafeteria. Photo by Sheila Kirven



Left to Right: Melissa Reich, 2023-24 Junior Miss Choctaw Nation Kassidy Lee, Kay Jackson, 2024-24 Little Miss Choctaw Nation Sophia McFarland, Faye Self, Suzanne Heard, and 2023-24 Miss Choctaw Nation Aliyah Myers. Photo by Sheila Kirven

Ohoyo Miko Yopisa

Princes Pageant



The 2024-2025 Choctaw Princesses are Senior Miss Melea Jefferson from District 2, Junior Miss Daryan Eubanks from District 9, and Little Miss Ava Davenport from District 9.

Photos by Chris Jennings



Bella Muncy waves to the crowd.



Above Left: Trinity Jarmillo answers her question.



Above Right: 2023-2024 princesses lead the 2024-2025 contestants on to the stage.

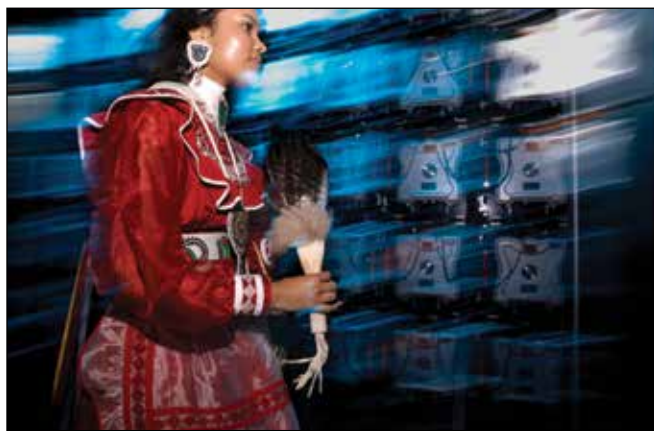


2023-2024 Royalty help Emma Battiest with her outfit.



Above: Adyson York walks across the stage.

Below: Ava Davenport is crowned the 2024 Little Miss Choctaw Nation.



Above: Kalin Beller walks by backstage. Below: Nerves were high before the beginning of the 2024 princess pageant.



Above: Neveah Jimenez waves to the crowd. Below: All of the contestants perform the Lord's Prayer to open the pageant.



Above: Contestants peek through the curtains backstage. Below: Backstage is full of conversation among contestants.



Fall big game hunting season is here

By Tabatha Keaton

The fall big game hunting season is upon us. This season marks the first year tribal members will be able to hunt on the Cherokee, Muscogee Creek, and Chickasaw reservations in addition to the Choctaw reservation.



On July 12, the Choctaw Nation signed the Five Tribe Wildlife Management Reciprocity Agreement. Through this agreement, tribal members may hunt on the reservations using their tribal membership card as their hunting and fishing license.

“This agreement demonstrates how tribal sovereignty enables us to enact policies to the 100% benefit of our tribal members,” said Matthew Gamble, Senior Manager of Wildlife Conservation.

Tribal members must follow the wildlife regulations (e.g., bag limits, season, etc.) of the tribe whose reservation they are hunting, fishing, or trapping but must report their harvests on the Chahta Achvffa portal, no matter where they are harvested.

“Our team has worked around the clock to ensure that tribal members can enjoy the benefit of this historic agreement,” said Gamble. “We look forward to seeing tribal members enjoy the expanded hunting and fishing access as a result of this agreement.”

You can find frequently asked questions, CNO’s Hunting and Fishing Regulations, Hunter Education Course, and contact information for the Wildlife Conservation team at <https://www.choctawnation.com/services/wildlife-conservation/>.

FAQs

Where can Choctaw tribal members hunt?

Choctaw tribal members can hunt and fish within the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muscogee/Creek, and Cherokee Nations with proof of tribal membership. Tribal members must have landowner permission to hunt private land and tribal members are responsible for any entry permits or fees required on public lands.

What if I want to hunt off the reservations of those tribes who have joined this agreement?

Outside of the reservations of the parties to this agreement, citizens and members comply with the rules of the controlling jurisdiction—such as another tribe, the State of Oklahoma, the State of Arkansas, the State of Texas, etc.

What documentation does a Choctaw tribal member need to have to hunt/fish?

You will need proof of Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma tribal membership. An additional form of ID might be requested to confirm identity. In addition, Hunter Safety course completion is required by the Choctaw Nation Fish, Game and Animals Code and the State of Oklahoma.

What happens if a Choctaw tribal member receives a ticket for not having a state-issued hunting/fishing license?

If you receive a ticket from an Oklahoma game warden for not having a state-issued hunting/fishing license while hunting within the Choctaw Nation boundaries, contact the Choctaw Nation Legal Department via the Member Legal Assistance webpage.

Can a game warden ticket a Choctaw tribal member?

Yes, state game wardens are cross-deputized and can enforce tribal wildlife laws within each reservation. If an individual game warden is not cross-deputized, a tribal officer will be called to enforce the tribal laws.

Can I harvest multiple limits on different reservations?

No, one aggregate and daily limit applies per person to harvests across all reservations per season and the entire State of Oklahoma.

What laws do I have to follow?

Tribal members/citizens must follow the licensure requirements of their tribe but must follow the wildlife regulations (e.g., bag limits, season, etc.) of the tribe whose reservation they are hunting, fishing, or trapping.

Do I still have to check-in my harvest?

Yes, all species with a check-in requirement must be checked in, and the check-in must be to the citizen’s tribe, regardless of the reservation where the animal was taken.

Do I have to buy tags?

Right now, all tags are free on all reservations. Just use the respective licensure from your tribe as your license and tags.

BISKINIK

Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma TOGETHER WE'RE MORE

Aktoba (October) 2024

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Chief Gary Batton gives 2024 state of the Nation Address.



Page 12:

Check out photo of this year’s Choctaw Nation 2024 Labor Day Festival Stickball Tournament.



Page 13:

See the highlights from the 2024 Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Labor Day Festival.

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

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