Candidates Certified for June 8 Tribal Election

A total of 56 candidates were certified as qualified candidates by the MBCI Tribal Election Committee in the upcoming Tribal Election on Tuesday, June 8, 2021.

Candidates are vying for 9 seats on the Choctaw Tribal Council for four-year terms expiring in 2025. An official candidate list was released on Tuesday, April 13.

The following enrolled Tribal members submitted proper nominating petitions in support of their candidacy:

see CANDIDATES, pg. 7

Tribe Unveils COVID-19 Memorial

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians marked a solemn period in history as they commemorated an unprecedented year impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic on the Choctaw Reservation.

On Friday, March 12, 2021, members of the Tribal leadership and representatives of the first responders community were in attendance for the COVID-19 Awareness Day Proclamation Signing and Memorial Dedication at Lake Pushmataha in Choctaw.

Due to safety precautions still in effect, the event hosted a limited number of attendees and was livestreamed to the Tribe’s YouTube channel for the public to witness.

The event concluded COVID-19 Awareness Week activities hosted by the Tribe to commemorate the one year anniversary since Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben issued the first COVID-19 Executive Order and State of Emergency Proclamation across Tribal lands of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

COVID-19 was identified as a threat to the members of the Tribe and the Choctaw culture, particularly Tribal Elders and those with compromised immune systems, as well as thousands of Tribal employees and community members.

see MEMORIAL, pg. 14

Choctaw Indian Fair Entertainers Announced

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is proud to announce the 71st edition of the Choctaw Indian Fair will take place July 14-17, 2021, in Choctaw, MS!

Taking the Main Stage at this year’s festivities include top Country and Contemporary Christian music artists. They include: Jimmie Allen on Thursday, July 15; Zach Williams on Friday, July 16; and Brett Young on Saturday, July 17.

Make plans now to celebrate four days of fun, social celebrations, cultural activities, arts and crafts demonstrations, stickball tournaments, and professional nightly entertainment in beautiful Choctaw, MS.

Follow and like Choctaw Indian Fair on Facebook for updates. Hope to see you soon!
Halito!

Even though we as a nation are still feeling the effects of this global pandemic, I am proud of the progress being made on our Tribal lands. We have been able to continue many of our construction and improvement projects, and have held ribbon cuttings, groundbreaking with a plan to hold many more over the summer.

Our Choctaw Tribal schools adhered to COVID safety guidelines and implemented hybrid and virtual learning options this school year. This allowed our students to focus their attention on learning, and now we are celebrating yet another school year and graduation with our seniors.

Our Choctaw Indian Fair committee is working hard to make this year’s edition of the Fair the best one yet. Although we are still several months before we can claim a true return to normalcy, I believe we have taken the appropriate steps to safely keep progress going on the Reservation.

I want to take a moment and congratulate our Choctaw Central Lady Warriors basketball team on an outstanding season. It was great to be back in the Big House again, and although our girls fell short of winning the state championship, they still gave it their all, and that’s what we like seeing!

We held a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony for the new Tucker community cemetery on Thursday, April 1. To our project managers and partners who planned out the project and cleared and prepared the land for the cemetery, we thank you. In attendance at the ribbon cutting were Tucker Tribal Council representatives Dorothy Wilson and Wilma Simpson-McMillan, local clergymen Father Bob Goodyear and Pastor Jason Martin, myself and our Choctaw Indian Princess Elisah Jimmie.

It was a solemn occasion, and although it may seem somewhat strange to cut a ribbon, there is no denying that having a community cemetery was unfortunately needed and much asked for. During this ceremony we offered up prayers and dedicated the land for the community.

The repair of Industrial Road and Industrial Drive in the Pearl River community is almost complete. This is another project I am happy to see moving forward. The work occurred from the intersection of Industrial Drive and Highway 16 (Pearl River Resort Welcome Center) to the intersection of Industrial Road and Recreation Road.
(Choctaw Tribal Headquarters). We expect all work to be completed by the end of May 2021.

On Wednesday, April 21, 2021, a ribbon cutting was held for the newest community housing subdivision in the Tucker community. In attendance were Tribal Council Representatives Dorothy Wilson and Wilma Simpson-McMillan (Tucker) and Loriann Ahshapanek (Standing Pine), myself, Choctaw Indian Princess Elisah Jimmie, staff from the Office of Construction Management and several of the homeowners.

Following the ribbon cutting, Representatives Wilson and Simpson-McMillan, Princess Elisah and I, presented housewarming gifts to homeowners who were home at the time. I also took a brief tour of the interior of a currently vacant house.

On Thursday, April 22, 2021, Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch visited the Tribe with a special donation of PPE (personal protective equipment). She first stopped by the Chahta Immi Cultural Center and met with Princess Elisah, who gave her a tour through the gallery. Following her visit to the Cultural Center, Ms. Fitch met with me at Choctaw Tribal Headquarters. Ms. Fitch brought with her several boxes of PPE (personal protective equipment). I presented Ms. Fitch with a beaded medallion as a token of appreciation and friendship. Thank you to Attorney General Lynn Fitch for your visit and your generous donation to the Tribe!

On Friday, April 23, 2021, a ribbon cutting ceremony was held for Rez Nutrition located at the Choctaw Town Center. I, along with Princess Elisah, Tribal Council Representatives Loriann Ahshapanek, Tarina Anderson, Deborah Martin, Wilma Simpson-McMillan, Hilda Nickey, Ronnie Henry, Sr. and Kendall Wallace, Rez Nutrition employees, Distinguished Young Woman Mary Kate Moran and Neshoba Co. Chamber/Main Street Director Tim Moore, had the honor of cutting the ribbon.

Rez Nutrition is located at 300 Choctaw Town Center, Suite 108 Choctaw, MS 39350 and is open from Mondays-Fridays: 9AM-4PM, Saturdays: 9AM-2PM and closed on Sundays. Call (601) 389-8057 to order in advance. Congratulations to Rez Nutrition and best wishes for success!

On Tuesday, April 13, and Friday, April 16, CCHS Warriors and Lady Warriors seniors from the powerlifting, baseball, track, golf, and fastpitch teams were recognized for their final regular season of their high school athletic careers. I, along with family, friends and other well-wishers, were on hand to celebrate with these outstanding athletes.

Seniors Kearson Grisham, Cephen Keats, Jawarrick Hickman, Speedy Lewis, II, Tayshawn Thomas, Billie Isom, Kyler Jefferson, Trevell Vivians, Gage Wesley, Sierra Wallace, Leilani Charlie, Jaiden Thomas, Charlita Gibson and Ciji Vaughn, thank you for your dedication to CCHS and wish you the best of days.
luck in your future endeavors. Go Warriors and Lady Warriors!  

Two Senior Nights were recently held at Neshoba Central High School, as baseball senior Ramie Harrison (on Tuesday, April 20) and softball seniors Ahlyric Ben, Elleigh Willis and Shante Beaulieu (on Thursday, April 22) were recognized. I was honored to join their families and congratulate them. Congratulations to these outstanding Rocket and Lady Rocket seniors on their accomplishments, and we wish them the best in their future endeavors!  

Congratulations also to the CCHS Lady Warriors Softball, CCHS Warriors Baseball, NC Lady Rockets Softball and NC Rockets Baseball teams on their seasons. It was great to see so many throughout our communities show up and support our sports teams and all Tribal athletes.  

On Thursday, May 6, 2021, I traveled to Jackson to Governor Tate Reeves’ Capitol office to witness the ceremonial signing of House Bill 277, which allows for the state to recognize Tribal identification cards as a legal means of personal identification, and House Bill 1230, which is a bill that allows businesses located on tribal lands to be eligible for certain discriminatory Mississippi Development Authority programs.  

Following the signing, I attended the 70th Mississippi National Day of Prayer ceremony at the Mississippi Coliseum. During the ceremony, Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce Commissioner Andy Gipson, on behalf of the state, read Senate Joint Resolution 14, enacted by the U.S. Congress in 2009. The resolution served as an apology to Native Americans on the wrongs and injustices carried out by the federal government over the past few centuries and also honored the stewardship of the land by Native Americans before the arrival of the settlers. Commissioner Gipson then personally turned to me, proudly representing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, and apologized to the Tribe on behalf of the state and closed his remarks with a prayer. Following Commissioner Gipson’s prayer, I had the distinct honor of praying for the State of Mississippi.  

Later that day, Commissioner Gipson corresponded with me via email and made the following statement: On a personal note, I am deeply grateful for your participation and acceptance, and your prayer for Mississippi. As you said, and I agree, we are One as the people of Mississippi. May God continue to bless you, your family and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.  

We are thankful to the State of Mississippi and its leaders for their continued support and continued reaffirmation of our Tribal sovereignty and for being great partners and friends to our Tribe.  

Our 2021 Choctaw Indian Fair committee has met a couple of times, preparing for our Tribe’s annual biggest cultural celebration. Although the full committee has now met twice, members of several subcommittees have been working behind the scenes for several months, planning, revising and finalizing details for this year’s Fair.  

Our stickball teams have begun their practices, prospective princess contestants are beginning to make their final decisions, and our Tribal artisans are hard at work making clothing, basketry and beadwork to showcase at the Fair.  

I am excited to announce our nightly entertainment lineup on the Main Stage are top Country and Contemporary Christian music artists: Jimmie Allen on Thursday, July 15th; Zach Williams on Friday, July 16th; and Brett Young on Saturday, July 17th.  

I know many Tribal members and guests alike are eagerly anticipating the Fair. We have lots of events planned that will be sure to excite everyone, from the young to the young at heart. Please like and follow Choctaw Indian Fair on Facebook for the latest updates.  

As you can see, we are steadily getting busier. Our COVID case numbers are down right now. But I encourage everyone not to get too comfortable. We must continue to follow all safety guidelines, and the mask mandate is still in effect on Tribal lands. Also, I urge you to get the COVID vaccine. These are the tools we have at our disposal in the fight against COVID.  

The only way for us to keep moving forward is for everyone to be unified in the goal of protecting each other. I thank you for all that you do in love and care for our Tribe. My prayers are that better days will come soon. God bless you all!  

Chi Yakokilih  

Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief
The following ordinances & resolutions were submitted to the Choctaw Tribal Council for consideration. Listed is a brief summary & action taken.

SPECIAL CALL MEETING  MARCH 4, 2021
RESOLUTION CHO 21-065, placing Baker & Hostetler LLP on the list of attorneys authorized to perform legal services for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) & to approve the terms of retention, was ADOPTED - 10 YES (L. Ahshapanek, T. Anderson, M. Briscoe, C. Eaves, N. Gibson, D. Martin, W. McMillan, H. Nicky, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr.,); 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN (D. Wilson); 6 ABSENT (R. Bell, R. Henry, Sr., R. Isaac, S. Johnson, B. McMillan, K. Wallace). SUMMARY: The Resolution approves adding Baker & Hostetler LLP to the list of attorneys authorized to perform legal services for the MBCI. Baker & Hostetler LLP has a Digital Risk Advisory & Cybersecurity Practice Group with experience advising government organizations on issues relating to cybersecurity. For more information, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-067(B), approving a Residential Lease for Jason Grisham & Kendall Grisham in the Pearl River Community, was ADOPTED - 10 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT. SUMMARY: The Resolution approves a residential lease for Jason & Kendall Grisham. They submitted an application through the Tribe’s Real Estate Program for a residential lease to construct a permanent dwelling & driveway in the Pearl River community. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-068(B), approving a Residential Lease for Ronnie Reed, Sr. & Katie Reed in the Pearl River Community, was ADOPTED - 10 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT. SUMMARY: The Resolution approves a residential lease for Ronnie, Sr. & Katie Reed. They submitted an application through the Tribe’s Real Estate Program for a residential lease to install a manufactured home in the Pearl River community. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-069(B), designating Tribal lands for roadway lighting along Choctaw Road in the Bogue Homa Community, was ADOPTED - 10 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT. SUMMARY: The Resolution approves designating Tribal lands for roadway lighting along Choctaw Road in the Bogue Homa Community. For more information, please contact Bok Homa Casino.

REGULAR CALL MEETING  APRIL 13, 2021
ORDINANCE NO. 74-A, revoking a Charter of Incorporation issued to Techparc Properties, Inc., was ENACTED - 16 YES (L. Ahshapanek, T. Anderson, M. Briscoe, C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., R. Isaac, S. Johnson, D. Martin, B. McMillan, W. McMillan, H. Nicky, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wallace, & D. Wilson); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT (R. Bell). SUMMARY: The Resolution establishes Title XXXVI Tribal Government in the Choctaw Tribal Code & enacts Chapter One as the Code of Conduct for Elected Officials. For more information, please contact the Office of the Attorney General.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-070(B), disenrolling Tribal Members, was ADOPTED - 16 YES (L. Ahshapanek, T. Anderson, M. Briscoe, C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., R. Isaac, S. Johnson, D. Martin, B. McMillan, W. McMillan, H. Nicky, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wallace, & D. Wilson); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT (R. Bell). SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the disenrollment of Tribal member T.N.S. from the MBCI. Section 22-4-2 of the Tribal Enrollment Code provides that individuals shall be disenrolled from membership in the Tribe when it is discovered that they did not meet the membership criteria set forth in Article III of the Revised Constitution & Bylaws of the MBCI at the time they were enrolled. For more information, please contact the Tribal Enrollment Office.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-071(B), approving increase in blood degree and/or name change for previously enrolled Tribal Members, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT. SUMMARY: The Resolution approves an increase in blood degree and/or name change for 9 previously enrolled Tribal members. For more information, please contact the Tribal Enrollment Office.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-072(B), approving Tribal see RESOLUTIONS, pg. 9
Notice From the Tribal Distribution Office

TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION WILL BE THURSDAY, JULY 1, 2021

* Checks will be mailed out on Tuesday, June 29, 2021. It is very important that you update your address.

IMPORTANT DEADLINE DATES TO REMEMBER!!

TRIBAL COURT (Child Support) - May 14, 2021, at 4:30 p.m.
DIRECT DEPOSIT - June 7, 2021, at 4:30 p.m.

OTHER CHANGES LISTED BELOW - June 7, 2021, at 4:30 p.m.

* OVER 18 YEARS OLD - Photo ID with birthdate.
* CUSTODY CHANGE - (Court Order) Parents need to fill out Changes to Tribal Distribution Form & the W-4V Tax Forms if you wish to stop the taxes from being taken out once your child/children is released back to you.
* NAME CHANGE - Marriage License/Divorce Papers with new name on your Social Security Card. List your dependents as well.
* ADDRESS CHANGE - It is very important that you do an address change with our office anytime you move. If you did a forwarding address with your local post office, you still need to submit an address change with our office. Forwarding time does have expiration. Anytime you do an address change for yourself, always include all of your dependents.
* TAX (W-4V) - It needs to be filled out by the individuals for themselves and/or their dependants if they wish to have taxes taken out or stopped.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

* Keep in mind if your check was captured for anything from the previous distribution, you will have to submit a new application to do Direct Deposit again.
* Only the individual/individuals listed as account holder should do Direct Deposit.
* If your child/children is not listed as account holder on your account, please do not list them.
* Do not use someone else’s account to setup Direct Deposit.
* It is very important that you let our office know whenever you close your account.

NEW ENROLLEES
Contact the Enrollment Office at 601-656-5251, ext. 1542.

UNCLAIMED CHECKS
Tribal Distribution Office will only hold your check for 6 months. If you have not received your check, please contact Barbara Ben at 601-650-1522. The check will be returned to the General Revenue Fund after 6 months if not claimed.

The Tribal Distribution Office is located on the upper level of the Tribal Office building in the Finance Department. Forms are available in the lobby or in the Finance Office. You can also visit www.choctaw.org. Forms will also be available at your local community facility building.

For more information, please contact Barbara Ben, Distribution Manager, at 601-650-1522.

Pearl River Resort Moves to Phase 2 of Reopening Plan

Pearl River Resort has moved to Phase 2 of the Resort’s reopening plan; easing certain restrictions related to COVID 19. This includes increasing capacity on the casino gaming floors from 50 percent to 75 percent & easing smoking restrictions.

Phase 2 of the Resort’s reopening plan began on Friday, March 19, 2021. This decision comes after consultation with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Tribal Government, Choctaw Gaming Commission, & Choctaw Health Services.

Other changes include:
* Increasing capacity to 75 percent for restaurants, retail outlets, meeting spaces & other Resort venues.
* Placing all slot machines & electronic table games back into service. (Chairs will not be added, as to continue promoting social distancing between players not in the same household or group. Players may move chairs to the open games.)
* Opening designated smoking areas inside at Silver Star Casino & Golden Moon Casino. Bok Homa Casino will remain smoke-free at this time.
* Reopening self-service drink stations on the casino floors.
* Resumption of full service at the Spa at Silver Star.

“Now that COVID-19 vaccines are readily available to all adults, more people are
candidacy and were qualified to become candidates for their respective communities in the Tribal Election.

BOGUE CHITTO (14 candidates, 2 positions) - Gabriel N. Bell, John L. Bell, Jr., Tomika L. Bell, Patricia Henry, Donnie Hickman, Jr., Angela S. Hundley, Randy L. Jim, Jackie Morris, Norman D. Samuel, Jr., Garrick Stoloby, Gabriel K. Thompson, Kendall S. Wallace (incumbent), and Elyse Willis.

CONEHATTA (8 candidates, 2 positions) - Max M. Anderson, Tarina K. Anderson (incumbent), Emerson J. Billy, Troy L. Chickaway, Shaun Grant, Eric Hickman, Hilda Nickey (incumbent), and Gregory R. Shoemake.

CRYSTAL RIDGE (4 candidates, 1 position) - Leola Clark, Christopher Eaves (incumbent), Joseph Wesley, and Tim G. Willis.


STANDING PINE (3 candidates, 1 position) - Lorriann Denson Ahshapane (incumbent), Jaric Anderson, and Larianna D. Denson.


Enrolled Tribal members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians had to fulfill the following requirements to be certified as a candidate:

- Has not been convicted of, or pled nolo contendre to, any felony offense occurring at any time in any jurisdiction, unless such felony conviction has been pardoned;
- Has a minimum of a high school diploma or a GED of a 12th grade equivalency;
- Is a resident of the Choctaw community which he or she desires to represent for at least six (6) months prior to the date of the election;
- Is registered to vote in the Choctaw community which he or she desires to represent;
- Secures endorsement signatures by at least 10 persons registered to vote in the Tribal Election in the community from which he/she intends to run for office. (This requirement shall not apply to Crystal Ridge community where three signatures will be required.)

Registered Tribal voters will cast their ballots on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m., from their respective Tribal community polling place. Polling sites include community facility buildings, gymnasiums in Bogue Chitto, Conehatta, Crystal Ridge, and Tucker.

The Henning, TN polling site will be at the Multi-Purpose Building on 1230 Highway 87 West. Pearl River’s polling site will be in the Pearl River Facility Building (downstairs) and Standing Pine’s polling site will be in the Standing Pine Facility Building meeting room.

The Tribal Election Committee includes: Berdie John, Chairperson; Amy Pauls, Member; Wonda McMillan, Member; and Melanie Benn, Danita Darlene Willis and Gary Williamson as Alternates.

The Tribal Election Committee will appoint a Local Community Election Committee...
Mingo Announces Candidacy for Tucker Tribal Council Seat

Demando Mingo has announced his candidacy for the position of Tucker Community Representative to the Choctaw Tribal Council. Tribal Elections are set for Tuesday, June 8, 2021. The following is from Mingo’s announcement.

“Halito! My name is Demando Mingo, 42 year old proud member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. My lovely wife Candace & I have been married 10 years & have been blessed with 6 wonderful kids. Our journey together has taken us to many exciting places but now it is time to give back to my community & my people. Therefore, I am officially announcing my candidacy to become your next representative for the Choctaw Community on the Choctaw Tribal Council.

Having been employed with the Choctaw Fire Department for 7 years, I am part of an outstanding team, currently serving as Sergeant. With that position, I try to be fair & just for all & will continue to do that for Tucker Community. While I am not at the fire station, you may see me working at the barber shop which I have been a licensed barber now for 8 years. It is my belief that public service is a responsibility that we all share & we should all be willing to contribute our time & best effort toward the overall well-being of the community in which we live, work & play. Mohammed Ali said it best, “Service to others is the rent you pay on earth.” With that being said, I sincerely hope you & your family will consider your vote for me, Demando Mingo, on Tuesday, June 8, 2021.

With respect, grace & humility I pledge to help the residents of Tucker Community by promising to work wherever & whenever possible to keep Tucker the best community in Neshoba County to live, work, educate & play. Should you have any questions or concerns, I look forward to hearing from each of you really soon. In the meantime, on Tuesday, June 8, 2021, remember to vote for Demando Mingo for Tucker Tribal Council. Your support is greatly appreciated. Yako-ki.”

Funds Available for COVID-Related Rent Relief

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) received a grant from the U.S. Department of the Treasury to assist renters who are behind on their rent & their utilities. Renters may also be eligible for assistance in paying rent & utilities for as long as 12 months.

An “eligible household” is defined as a renter household in which at least one or more individuals meet the following criteria:

i. Qualifies for unemployment or has experienced a reduction in household income, incurred significant costs, or experienced a financial hardship due to COVID-19;

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(Candidates) for each community to conduct this election. Tribal members who are registered to vote will cast their ballots at the polling place operated by the LCEC. Voters may be asked to show a form of identification.

REGISTRATION

Tribal members 18 years of age or older who have not yet registered to vote may register at the Tribal Election Office. See Mavis H. Hickman, Tribal Voter Registration Coordinator. If you do not register to vote on or before 5:00 p.m., May 7, 2021, you cannot vote in the June 8, 2021 election. If you have already registered to vote, you do not need to register again unless you have moved to another community since the day of your registration.

Any registered voter in a community may challenge the residency of a person on the initial voters list by filing a voter challenge form to the Tribal Election Committee within 10 business days of the posting of the initial voters list. The deadline to challenge voter residency is 4:30 p.m. on March 23, 2021.

ABSENTEE BALLOT

Any qualified registered voter who is age 57 or above, or who is physically unable to appear at the poll on election date, or who resides 50 miles or more distance from the community in which he or she is registered to vote, shall be entitled to vote by absentee ballot.

Request for mailed absentee ballot must be submitted in writing to the Tribal Election Committee at the Tribal Election Office not later than 12:00 noon on May 19, 2021. Requests for mailed absentee ballots received after this date and time will not be honored.

Walk-in absentee ballot requests shall be submitted in writing to the Tribal Election Committee starting on May 20, 2021, through 12:00 noon on the day before the election. Document of proof supporting the walk-in absentee ballot request is mandatory.

Mailed and walk-in requests for absentee ballots can be only for the person making the request; the request cannot be made on behalf of others. The deadline to return absentee ballots to the TEC is 12:00 noon on June 7, 2021. Absentee ballots received after the deadline shall not be counted.

For further information, please contact the TEC at one of the following numbers: (601)650-7475, (601)650-7468 or FAX (601)389-2252. You may also contact the Committee by writing to: Office of Tribal Election Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians P.O. Box 6052 Choctaw, MS 39350 Chairpersons of the eight Local Election Committees, who are officially appointed to conduct elections in your respective community, may also be contacted. The Choctaw Tribal Election Code is available at the MBCI website at www.choctaw.org.
Enrollments, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves Tribal enrollment of 43 persons beginning with the name M. Allen & ending with J. Wilson in the MBCI & does hereby direct that roll numbers be assigned. With the adoption of this Resolution, there will be 11,042 enrolled Tribal members. For more information, please contact the Tribal Enrollment Office.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-073, placing Drummond Woodsum on the list of attorneys authorized to perform legal services for the MBCI & to approve terms of retention, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the MBCI to apply for a loan from Central Electric Power Association to renovate industrial & commercial facilities. Central Electric Power Association receives funding through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant (USDA REDLG) program for the purpose of providing zero-interest loans of up to $1,000,000 for projects that will create & retain employment in rural areas. The use of a USDA REDLG loan to fund proposed renovations of MBCI’s industrial & commercial facilities will promote economic development throughout Central Mississippi. For more information, please contact the Office of Economic Development.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-075, authorizing a Distribution of Tribal Funds, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution authorizes a Distribution of Tribal Funds in the amount of $600 per Tribal member on July 1, 2021. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Distribution.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-076, approving revisions to Choctaw Gaming Commission Regulations, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves revisions to Chapter 6 & Chapter 14 of the Choctaw Gaming Commission Regulations. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Gaming Commission.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-077, approving revisions to Chapter 10 of the Choctaw Gaming Commission Regulations, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves revisions to Chapter 6 & Chapter 14 of the Choctaw Gaming Commission Regulations. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Gaming Commission.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-078, applying for & administer Emergency Watershed Protection Program Funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service for watershed damage repair in Tribal Communities, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves revisions to Chapter 10 of the Choctaw Gaming Commission Regulations. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Gaming Commission.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-079(B), purchasing ±120 acres of land in Neshoba County, Mississippi, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the MBCI to purchase ±120 acres of land in Neshoba County, MS for the price not to exceed $250,000. For more information, please contact the Office of Public Works.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-080, confirming the judicial appointment of Rita Mattera as Civil Court Judge in the Choctaw Tribal Courts, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution confirms the judicial appointment of Rita Mattera as Civil Court Judge in the Choctaw Tribal Courts. Ms. Mattera will fill the vacant Civil Court Judge position until the date of the Regular Call Tribal Council meeting in April 2025, or until a successor has been duly nominated & confirmed for a subsequent term. For more information, please contact the Office of Public Works.

RESOLUTIONS continued from page five

Through the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program both now & in the future to receive funding for the repair of watershed damage caused by natural disasters that meet certain qualifying criteria. For more information, please contact the Office of Public Works.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-080, confirming the judicial appointment of Rita Mattera as Civil Court Judge in the Choctaw Tribal Courts, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution confirms the judicial appointment of Rita Mattera as Civil Court Judge in the Choctaw Tribal Courts. Ms. Mattera will fill the vacant Civil Court Judge position until the date of the Regular Call Tribal Council meeting in April 2025, or until a successor has been duly nominated & confirmed for a subsequent term. For more information, please contact the Office of Public Works.

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Policy & Legislative Office.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-081, authorizing the MBCI Department of Schools to apply for a W.K. Kellogg Foundation Racial Equity 2030 Grant, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution authorizes the MBCI Department of Schools to apply for a W.K. Kellogg Foundation Racial Equity 2030 Grant. The Kellogg Foundation grant funds will allow the Department of Schools to engage in a 10-year long project to include self-assessment & evaluation, instructional services improvement, a greater focus on Choctaw language & culture in the Choctaw Tribal Schools, to address & reduce racial inequity & to increase the number of licensed Choctaw teachers in the classrooms. For more information, please contact the Department of Schools.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-082, amending the Choctaw Tribal Schools’ Grading Policy to provide students equity in grading in the event of extenuating circumstances that impede the learning process, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution amends the Choctaw Tribal Schools’ grading policy to provide students equity in grading in the event of extenuating circumstances that impede the learning process.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-083, approving the revised Youth Opportunity Program Employee Handbook, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the revised 2021-2022 Youth Opportunity Program Employee Handbook. For more information, please contact the Youth Opportunity Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-084, authorizing the Department of Family & Community Services to apply for a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime FY 2021 Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside Program Grant, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution authorizes the Department of Family & Community Services to apply for a U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office for Victims of Crime FY 2021 Tribal Victim Services Set-Aside Program Grant. The grant funds will support a range of activities including needs assessment, strategic planning, program development & implementation, program expansion, & other activities to address the victim services needs. The overall goal is to provide support & develop innovative training & technical assistance & to provide direct services to improve the overall quality of victim assistance and services. For more information, please contact the Department of Family & Community Services.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-085, authorizing the MBCI to submit a proposal to participate in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) 2018 Farm Bill Demonstration Project for Tribal Organizations. The Tribe’s participation in the FDPIR 2018 Farm Bill Demonstration Project for Tribal Organizations will allow the Food Distribution Program to purchase agricultural commodities from suppliers within MBCI’s Reservation including Choctaw Fresh Produce instead of ordering those commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. For more information, please contact the Department of Family and Community Services.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-086, accepting a Mississippi Country Music Trail Marker to commemorate the history of country music performed at the Choctaw Indian Fair, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the MBCI to accept a Mississippi Country Music Trail Marker to commemorate the history of country music performed at the Choctaw Indian Fair. The Tourism Division of the Mississippi Development Authority of the State of Mississippi established the state-wide Country Music Trail to commemorate the contributions of persons, performers, & entities to the country music industry. The Country Music Trail Commission in conjunction with the Community Development Partnership of Neshoba County recommends that a Country Music Trail marker be installed on the Reservation to commemorate the contributions of the Choctaw Indian Fair to the promotion of the country music industry. For more information, please contact the Office of Special Projects.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-087, authorizing the Department of Early Childhood Education to apply for supplemental funds from the Administration for Children & Families, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution authorizes the Department of Early Childhood Education (DOECE) to apply for supplemental funds from the Administration for Children & Families. The DOECE is an annual recipient of grant funds from the Administration for Children & Families. The DOECE will apply for a supplemental cost-of-living adjustment & quality improvement funds in the amount of $29,471. For more information, please contact the Department of Early Childhood Education.

SPECIAL CALL MEETING
APRIL 30, 2021

RESOLUTION CHO 21-088, authorizing formation of, to approve an operating agreement for, and to approve a transfer of funds to Choctaw Investments, LLC, was ADOPTED - 12 YES (T. Anderson, M. Briscoe, C. Eaves, R. Henry, Sr., R. Isaac, D. Martin, B. McMillan, H. Nickey, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wallace, & D. Wilson); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 5 ABSENT (L. Ahshapanek, R. Bell, N. Gibson, S. Johnson, & W. McMillan).

SUMMARY: The Resolution authorizes the formation of Choctaw Investments, LLC, to pursue potential business opportunities on behalf of the Tribe. The Tribe, along with three additional partners, will participate in a hotel development project in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. The Tribal entity will have a 30 percent interest in the hotel development project. For more information,
please contact the Office of Economic Development.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-089, approving a Memorandum of Understanding between Neshoba County General Hospital’s Wellness Works Program and the MBCI. The purpose of the MOU with Neshoba County General Hospital’s Wellness Works Program is to conduct random drug screening of MBCI Tribal Government employees & elected officials. The testing will include random drug & breath-alcohol testing pursuant to the Tribe’s Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy Procedures as contained in the Administrative Personnel Policy & Procedures.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-090(B), acquiring ±58 acres of land in Neshoba County, Mississippi & to transfer fee title to the United States of America in trust for the MBCI, was ADOPTED - 12 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 5 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Neshoba County General Hospital’s Wellness Works Program & the MBCI. The purpose of the MOU with Neshoba County General Hospital’s Wellness Works Program is to conduct random drug screening of MBCI Tribal Government employees & elected officials. The testing will include random drug & breath-alcohol testing pursuant to the Tribe’s Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy Procedures as contained in the Administrative Personnel Policy & Procedures.

RESOLUTION CHO 21-091, transferring funds to the Choctaw Housing & Land Mortgage Program for new housing loans & to authorize the continued use of excess interest, fees and principal collected for the issuance of new loans to Tribal Members, was ADOPTED - 12 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 5 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution authorizes the transfer of funds in the amount of $2,000,000 to the Choctaw Housing & Land Mortgage Program for new housing loans to purchase & construct homes. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Housing & Land Mortgage Program.

Mattera Confirmed as Civil Court Judge
Congratulations to Rita Mattera as she was confirmed by the Choctaw Tribal Council as Civil Court Judge in the Choctaw Tribal Courts on Tuesday, April 13. After her confirmation, she was sworn in to her new role with her family in attendance.

COVID-19 Consumer Protection Notices
Submitted by MBCI Office of the Attorney General

SOCIAL MEDIA
POSTING OF COVID-19 VACCINATION CARDS

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has issued an alert to consumers to protect their personal information by avoiding the posting of COVID-19 vaccination cards on social media.

These cards contain your date of birth, which can lead scammers to find your Social Security number. Once they have this information, scammers can steal your identity by opening new accounts in your name, claiming your tax refund, or stealing your identity in general concerning other aspects of your credit history.

If you have already posted your vaccination card on social media, the FTC recommends that you remove it immediately. There are other ways to show that you have been vaccinated, such as using a “frame”, or posting photos of your arm after vaccination, or a photo of a sticker.

It is also a good idea to update your security settings & passwords on your social media pages.

FEMA SCAM ALERT REGARDING FUNERAL ASSISTANCE

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has issued an alert to consumers that scammers are reaching out to the public to offer to register them for funeral assistance. FEMA does not contact people prior to them being registered for various types through their agency.

You should not provide any personal information to anyone who may call you and identify themselves as representing FEMA or any other U.S. government agency, unless you have initiated previous contact with FEMA, or other agency, and have given permission to receive follow up contacts via phone.

Information and eligibility for COVID-19 Funeral Assistance can be found at https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funer-al-assistance, or by calling the Covid-19 Funeral Assistance Line Number at 844-684-6333 (TTY 800-462-7585).

Applications begin on April 12, 2021. Hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Eastern Time.

NO online applications are being taken for this assistance. You must call to speak with a FEMA representative to determine eligibility for this one-time assistance.

The link to FEMA’s Frequently Asked Questions page is: https://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance/faq
CAYC, Volunteers Clean Communities  One of Chahta Alla Youth Council’s purpose is to promote healthy & safe environments in their communities. In March & mid-April, the members dedicated their Saturdays for community-wide cleanup projects. Afterwards, a meal was provided by community members as a token of appreciation. CAYC wasn’t able to get to all roads in the communities, but hope the initiative would motivate Tribal members to have a cleaner & safer community. CAYC appreciates those that helped pick up trash, prepared meals, & especially to Facility Building & Recycling Center crews. They encourage all to take care of our communities by picking up & throwing trash in their proper places.

Mosquito Control Spraying Schedule Announced

The Choctaw Health Center Environmental Health Services will conduct monthly Ultra Low Volume (ULV) mosquito spraying in the Tribal communities during the hours of either 5 a.m.-8 a.m. or 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Mosquito sprayings will be from May-September of 2021. Schedule is subject to change due to inclement weather or unforeseen events.

SCHEDULE
1st Tuesday - Pearl River (A)  
North of Hwy. 16 - Blackjack Road, Tribal Complex Road, Industrial Drive, James Billie Road, Frog Level Road, & Goat Ranch Road.

1st Thursday - Pearl River (B) - Oswald Road, Willis Road, Ball Park Road, Lewis Road, Cemetery Road, Wolf Trail, Park Place, & Rolling Hills.

2nd Tuesday - Red Water.

2nd Thursday - Tucker.

3rd Tuesday - Bogue Chitto & Crystal Ridge.

3rd Thursday - Conchatta.

4th Tuesday - Standing Pine.

4th Thursday - Bogue Homa.

For questions regarding mosquito control, please contact Jeremaine Jim or Joshua M. Weaver, Ph.D., at the CHC Environmental Health Services at (601)389-4142.
• Identify - Individu- als should be screened at every visit with a health care professional.
• Engage - Talk openly about suicide risk & available treatment to address.
• Treat - Brief interventions delivered during single in person encounters are effective at reducing suicide behaviors.
• Transition - Providers should routinely use caring contacts, appointment reminders & bridge appointments to ensure patients comply with appointments & a plan for continuity of care.
• Improve - Continuous quality care can only be effectively implemented in a safe oriented & culture free of blame include support- ing clinicians & staff.

PEOPLE WITH SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDER

We know that drug use can have serious effects on the body.
• The use of opioids can cause slow breathing, & can even result in ineffective breathing, which can lead to decreased oxygen in the blood, brain damage, or death.
• The use of stimulants, such as cocaine, amphetamine, & methamphetamine can cause acute health problems such as stroke, heart attacks, abnormal heart rhythm, & seizures, as well as more chronic conditions, such as heart or lung damage.
• The use of drugs by vaping or smoking (for example, heroin, crack cocaine, marijuana) can make chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, & other lung conditions worse.
• Other conditions that affect the immune response, such as HIV, are more common among people who use drugs, especially among those who inject drugs.
• People with substance use disorder are at increased risk of severe illness & death from COVID-19.
• Increased stress can lead to increases in alcohol & substance use.

If you or a loved one has any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Choctaw Behavioral Health at (601)389-4150. For immediate help in a crisis, call 911.

COVID-19 TESTING

CHC continues to provide the following COVID-19 testing!

Rapid Antigen Testing
- For acute (current) infection
- Antibody (IgM and IgG) tests
- For patients who are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Nasal swab testing
- Results are ready in 15 to 45 minutes at the CHC drive-thru testing site

PCR Viral Testing
- For acute (current) infection or exposure
- For patients who have been exposed to COVID-19 or are experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms:
  - Fever or chills
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea
- Results are ready in 24 to 48 hours at the CHC drive-thru testing site

COVID-19 Antibody Testing
- For past infection with virus that causes COVID-19 infection
- To help determine if someone has had previous COVID-19 infection
- Requires a blood sample to be taken; scheduled by healthcare provider
- Contact CHC Immunization at 601-389-4150 to schedule an appointment
- Check for antibodies in the blood drawn after COVID-19 infection
- Blood sample is sent to an outside lab for results that may take up to 3 days
- Antibody tests should not be used to diagnose a current infection with the virus that causes COVID-19
- Types of Antibody Tests available at CHC
  - Total Antibody Test - This test is for individuals who have had the COVID-19 virus but have not received a vaccine.
  - Spike Antibody Test - This test is for individuals who have had the COVID-19 virus but have received their full vaccinations. The patient will need to know the date of their last vaccination and what type of vaccine they received.
  - Neutralizing and Spike Antibody Testing - This test is for individuals who have had the COVID-19 virus and have received their full vaccinations. The patient will need to know the date of their last vaccination and what type of vaccine they received.

Has COVID-19 had a Negative Impact on Your Mental Health?
Experiencing increased anxiety, depression, substance use, or other mental health problems? Research indicates that COVID-19 has caused an increase in alcohol consumption, unemployment, homelessness, domestic violence, abuse, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other drug use. All of these issues elevate suicide risk!

ATTENTION MBCI WIC PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Fruits & Veggies Coming Soon!!!

All children and women participants will receive $35.00 for fruits and vegetables for June 2021- September 2021 WIC Benefits
This is a temporary increase that is valid for 4 months

The $35 cash value benefit (CVB) will be loaded to participant’s eWIC card and can be redeemed when the participant’s First Date to Use (FDTU) begins in June 2021

Participants can use the cash value benefit (CVB) to purchase any fresh, frozen or canned fruit or vegetable that does not have added sugars, fats or oils

For more information, please call the WIC Office at 601-389-4510
visitors. It was after the declaration that preventative actions were put in place and has since been in effect to alleviate the impact of COVID-19 on Tribal lands.

“Today, we mark this historic time with the proclamation signing to never forget and forever memorialize those who lost lives to COVID-19 and the many brave frontline heroes who continue to fight for healing and wellness. It is also to reemphasize the efforts we all must make to prevent the spread of COVID-19,” said 2019-2021 Choctaw Indian Princess Elisah Jimmie, who also served as mistress of ceremony.

From the first reported Tribal member COVID-19 related deaths in April 2020 until March 12, 2021, the official overall deceased count stands at 112 individuals.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben offered his condolences to the families of loved ones who were lost to COVID-19 and reminded those in attendance that although loss brings pain and sorrow, it also brings blessings that we were a part of their lives as they have contributed to ours also.

“Our elders have contributed in many ways for our communities. Their contributions will continue because they planted seeds that will continue and we will carry on for those loved ones,” said Chief Ben.

Reflecting back over a year ago when the virus was sweeping the globe and making its way into the U.S., Chief Ben acknowledged the readiness and bravery of frontline responders as they often prepared daily for the unknown.

“The impact has been great in terms of affecting our lives to the literal sense of losing lives. Sometimes, the hardest thing is battling something you can’t see, but it changed our lives to being prepared for the unknown. I applaud not only our frontline service men and women, but each and everyone of us as community members, Tribal members, employees, friends, and family. We take our own personal steps in protecting ourselves, protecting our loved ones, and protecting our community,” said Chief Ben.

Looking forward to what will be considered the new “normal,” Chief Ben said the pandemic has changed our outlook as we have to be prepared for each and every moment.

“Whether its distance learning from schools, working from home to utilization of technology and virtual platform, we continue that today. Those of you joining us by social media and digital technology, we thank you because that’s been the new norm. We’ve not been able to be together in the tight knit atmosphere that we are used to, but we can connect by relying on technology.”

As we continue to wear masks, practice social distancing and sanitizing hands and environment, many people believe it infringes on their personal freedoms, but Chief Ben said we have to remember that lives were lost to the pandemic.

“Our spirit has always been strong and resilient to overcome adversity. Young lives that we lost have contributed to our communities. To those elders that contributed so much, their contributions are not forgotten because it continues through each and everyone of us. Their spirits will live on through you, your family, our community. Be strong as we continue to be resilient and be proud to be a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw

MEMORIAL ......................... continued from page one
Chief Ben emphasized that the pandemic is not over and COVID-19 is still here and still contagious. Vaccines are available and vaccines save lives and encouraged all Tribal members to get vaccinated.

“Hopefully later this year, our lives can begin to get back to normal, but that remains to be seen. Now is the time to continue being safety-minded and follow all recommended safety precautions, such as wearing a facial mask, washing hands thoroughly and often or using hand sanitizer, keeping social distance or six feet apart and staying home if you are sick.”

Choctaw Tribal Council Standing Pine Representative Loriann Ahshapanek said the Tribe has grieved as one as hearts were broken open and sewn together with losses of loved ones who meant so much to families.

“This past year has been the most difficult time we experienced due to the global pandemic. Many tears were shed as we missed our loved ones who are no longer with us. We mourned many deaths and it has been a long process to heal, recovering one day at a time. My prayer is that God knows the sorrow of those who lost a loved one during the pandemic. The sorrow was made more difficult because of the good-byes were not said, hands that were not held, family and community gatherings yet to happen,” said Ahshapanek.

“Today, we grieve together as a community and as a Tribe, we will heal together. Let us hold on to the faith and hope of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us remember in Isaiah 40:31, ‘But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.’ Together, we will overcome this pandemic.”

The moment arrived to unveil the “Hunky Cross” memorial as Chief Ben and members of the Choctaw Tribal Council in attendance, along with cross maker Pamela Morrow and several members of the Choctaw Fire Department, took off the protective covering.

The towering cedar cross, with stones set around the base, was donated as part of the Hunky Cross Project, a community wide effort led by Ms. Morrow in memory of her late son, Austin Morrow, who passed away in a car accident in 2015. As a grieving parent, she started the project by building and donating crosses to help other grieving families. With the deaths of Tribal members to COVID-19, she felt the need to donate a symbolic cross to help the Tribe heal, reflect, and give respect to the lives lost.

Chief Ben then signed the proclamation recognizing March 12, 2021, as a Tribal observance of COVID-19 Pandemic Awareness Day to re-emphasize necessary COVID safety protocols, to remember the loss of our loved ones, to honor the frontline and essential workers working tirelessly during the pandemic to remind each of us of the continued importance of COVID safety protocols and to acknowledge the difficult hardships and challenges we, as Tribal members and citizens of the State of Mississippi and the United States of America, have endured due to COVID-19 Pandemic.

In honor and memory of the lives of Tribal members and loved ones lost to the COVID-19, flags were flown at half-staff at all Tribal buildings, grounds and enterprises beginning from sunrise on Friday, March 12 until sunset on Monday, March 15.

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**COVID-19 Vaccination Transportation**

**CALL 601-650-7372**

- Tuesdays and Thursdays only: LOCAL
- Between the hours of 10:00am – 3:00pm
- Please call 24 hours in advance to schedule an appointment for transportation
- Notify the Dispatcher that your call is for the vaccination transportation
- Must have a COVID-19 Vaccine clinic appointment with CHC prior to scheduling transportation
  - To schedule a vaccine appointment please call the PHS COVID-19 Hotline at 601-389-4118 or 601-389-4109.

“We’ll take you to the spot to get your shot!!!”

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**Why Get Vaccinated?**

To Protect Yourself, Your Coworkers, Your Patients, Your Family, and Your Community

- Building defenses against COVID-19 in this facility and in your community is a team effort. And you are a key part of that defense.
- Getting the COVID-19 vaccine adds one more layer of protection for you, your coworkers, patients, and family.

Here are ways you can build people's confidence in the new COVID-19 vaccines in your facility, your community, and at home:

- Get vaccinated and enroll in the v-safe text messaging program to help CDC monitor vaccine safety.
- Tell others why you are getting vaccinated and encourage them to get vaccinated.
- Learn how to have conversations about COVID-19 vaccine with coworkers, family, and friends.

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/vaccines
Notice of Availability of Program Funds

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC) has been awarded funds by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food & Nutrition Service (FNS) to provide free nutritious supplemental food to eligible & certified participants.

Who is Eligible for WIC?
Pregnant, breastfeeding & postpartum women, infants, & children up to age 5 who meet income eligible criteria & are determined to be at nutrition risk are eligible for WIC program benefits. Low iron levels in the blood (anemia), underweight, overweight, or poor diet are examples of nutrition risk.

Applicants who are eligible to receive health services at the Choctaw Health Center are eligible to apply for the MBCI WIC Program.

To meet income guidelines, applicant’s income must fall at or below 185 percent of the U.S. Poverty Income Guidelines (see income eligibility guidelines below). Proof of income for the past 30 days is required to be certified.

Applicants who participate in other benefit programs such as Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) automatically meet the income eligibility requirement. Proof of eligibility in the participating program is required.

Applicants must provide proof of identify & proof of residency. Examples of proof of ID include: Tribal ID, work badge or driver’s license, Social Security Card, immunization form, etc.

Proof of residency is required within the Choctaw reservation & its surrounding areas. Examples of proof of residency include: utility bill, rent or mortgage statement, receipt for lodging or housing, state, local, tribal document showing residential address, mailing address plus Tribal Name.

**WIC Facts**

- If you participate in another assistance program you may be automatically income-eligible for WIC.
- Breastfeeding mothers are eligible to participate in WIC longer than non-breastfeeding mothers.
- More than half of the infants in the U.S. participate in WIC.
- WIC participants support the local economy throughout their purchases.
- WIC works with farmers markets to help increase participant access to provide fresh, locally grown fruits & vegetables.

**What Benefits does WIC Provide?**
The WIC program offers a variety of benefits to participants including:

- Nutrition assessments & education;
- Referrals to health & social programs;
- Breastfeeding education & support;
- Access to WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors;
- Summer Farmer’s Market benefits;
- Nutritious foods such as milk, whole grain bread, cereals, eggs, beans & peanut butter, fruits & vegetables & more!

**Contact Us**
The WIC office is located on the first floor of the Choctaw Health Center. Office Hours are Monday-Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For more information, please call the WIC office at 389-4510.

The MBCI WIC Program is currently completing all services by phone at this time.

**Mason Newly Certified Firefighter**

Firefighter John Mason of the Choctaw Fire Department graduated April 15, 2021, from the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Firefighter I-II course, held at the Mississippi State Fire Academy in Jackson.

This intense seven-week course included classroom & hands-on instruction in the areas of fire behavior, fire suppression, rescue, incident command, hazardous materials & other fire related topics.

This course meets & exceeds the National Fire Protection Association for Firefighter...
Dr. Brent Gregory, East Central Community College (ECCC) President & staff members recently visited the Chahta Immi Cultural Center, based in the Pearl River Community in Choctaw. The goal of the group’s visit was to learn aspects of the Choctaw culture & the Tribe’s contributions to the state of Mississippi.

ECCC officials were hosted by Martha Spencer, Cultural Center Coordinator, & Jay Wesley, MBCI Department of Chahta Immi Director.

The group received a guided tour & was provided detailed information on aspects of the museum’s contents. They also had the opportunity to view the Choctaw Expressions video which helps give visitors an additional visual representation of Choctaw culture as it originated over the centuries & how it is celebrated today.

Under the direction of Dr. Gregory, it is hoped that ECCC can one day implement a school-based cultural center highlighting East Central Mississippi’s contributions to the state’s identity. He also wishes to have the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians appropriately represented through a strong working partnership with the Tribal Cultural Affairs Department & ensure all students have an appreciation for the school’s honored namesake.

Dr. Gregory also stated his commitment that anything representing the Tribe will be done through this partnership & honor the Choctaw people’s past & present.

This visit is the first of many by ECCC administration officials to ensure MBCI members have access to the benefits a community college degree offers for a successful career & future.

Region V Science, Engineering Lower Fair Winners Announced

Mississippi State University hosted this year’s Region V Virtual Science & Engineering Lower Fair on April 5-16. Seventy-six projects were entered representing Choctaw Tribal Elementary Schools from Bogue Chitto (BCES), Pearl River (PRES), Tucker (TES), & Red Water (RWES).

**KINDERGARTEN:** Physics & Astronomy - Dominic Willis, 3rd place (TES); Plant Science - Keilani Gibson, 2nd place (TES).

**1ST GRADE:** Biochemistry - Faithlyn Minigo, 1st place (TES); Earth & Environmental Science - 1st James Polk, 1st place (TES); Jacaius Willis, 2nd place (TES); Lai’Lee Wallace, 3rd place, (TES); Physics & Astronomy - Kaleb Farmer, 3rd place (TES); 4th Mariah McBeath, 4th place (PRES).

**2ND GRADE:** Biochemistry - Anzaerius Huddleston (PRES); Inorganic Chemistry - Mylah Gibson, 1st place (TES); Physics & Astronomy - Easton Hundlest, Honorable Mention

see REGION V FAIR, pg. 18
Congratulations to several Tucker Elementary School students for recently placing in the Mississippi Association of Conservation District’s Poster & Essay Contests recognizing outstanding conservation. This year’s theme was “Healthy Forest=Healthy Communities” as six students placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in their respective categories for the Neshoba County Soil & Water Conservation District on the county level. Students placing in the competition included:

- Grades 4th-6th: Hunter Segenhagen, 1st place, poster; Shastyn Lewis, 2nd place, poster; & Centarain Black, 3rd place, poster.
- Grades 7th-9th: Aiyana Frazier, 1st place, essay & 2nd place, poster; Hailey Jefferson, 1st place, poster; & Kalyn Edwards, 3rd place, poster.

Students will receive a prize award for their placement in the contest & an invitation to the Neshoba County Soil & Water Conservation District’s annual banquet this October. First place winners will advance to the area level to compete in the MACD Central Area competition.

KINDERGARTEN: Physics & Astronomy - Dominic Willis, 3rd place; Plant Science - Keilani Gibson, 2nd place.
1ST GRADE: Biochemistry - Faithlyn Mingo, 1st place; Earth & Environmental Science - James Polk, 1st place, Jacaius Willis, 2nd place, Lai’Lee Wallace, 3rd place; Physics & Astronomy - Kaleb Farmer, 3rd place.

Water Conservation District’s annual banquet this October. First place winners will advance to the area level to compete.

REGION V FAIR ............... continued from page seventeen

(BCES); Plant Science - A’Ria McMillan, 2nd place (TES).
3RD GRADE: Math & Systems Software - Lazethan Billy, 1st place (TES).
4TH GRADE: Inorganic Chemistry - Jessiny Cotton, 2nd place (BCES); Earth & Environmental Science - Cameron Gibson, 4th place (TES); Physics & Astronomy - Chana- sha Miller, 3rd place (BCES), Karsyn Wallace, 5th place (BCES); Engineering Mechanics - Liyah Baca, 4th place (BCES); Plant Science - Jordan Frazier, 6th place (BCES).
5TH GRADE: Biochemistry - Xanaeya Chapman, 1st place (TES); Inorganic Chemistry - Mamie Sam, 3rd place (TES), Antonio Flores, 4th place (BCES); Jzahn Conrad, 5th place (BCES); Math & Systems Software - Karahdee Dan, 1st place (TES); Plant Science - Zachary Polk, 5th place (TES).

Tucker Students Compete in Region V Science Fair

Tucker Elementary School had 15 students to compete in the Region V Science & Engineering Fair, hosted virtually by Mississippi State University.

Tucker had six students placing first, three students placing second, four students placing third, one student placing fourth, & one student placing fifth. Congratulations to these students.

Thomas Wins “Dream Big” Essay Contest

Braelynn Thomas, 3rd grade student at Tucker Elementary School, recently competed in the Mississippi Children’s Museum-Meridian’s “Dream Big, Sky’s the Limit” essay contest sponsored by East Mississippi Retired Educators Association and Alan & Marilyn Brown. Contestants were asked to write about their ‘Big Dreams.” Out of 420+ entries, Braelynn was one of 10 winners! She received a Mississippi Children’s Museum-Meridian T-shirt, bag, & two general admission tickets. Braelynn is pictured above with her teacher Tanya Tullos. Congratulations!

Tucker Students Place in Poster, Essay Contests

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Students will receive a prize award for their placement in the contest & an invitation to the Neshoba County Soil & Water Conservation District’s annual banquet this October. First place winners will advance to the area level to compete in the MACD Central Area competition.

Pictured front row, from left, are James Polk, Kaleb Farmer, Lai’Lee Wallace, Keilani Gibson; middle row, Dominic Willis, Mamie Sam, A’Ria McMillan, Mylah Gibson, Jacaius Willis, Faithlyn Mingo; back row, Karahdee Dan, Zachary Polk, Lazethan Billy, Cameron Gibson, & Xanaeya Chapman.

Pictured, from left, are Hunter Segenhagen, Kalyn Edwards, Centarain Black, Shastyn Lewis, Hailey Jefferson, & Aiyana Frazier.
CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

Choctaw Central Hosts Senior Nights
Choctaw Central High School recently hosted Senior Nights for participants in spring sports. On Friday, April 16, seniors participating in track and field, golf, and fast-pitch softball were honored. They included Trevell Vivians, Kyler Jefferson, Dicenzo Sam, Sierra Wallace, Jaiden Thomas, Sarah Williams, Lyleonia Johnson, Brayson Samuel, and Ciji Vaughn.

Career Technical Education Month Proclamation Signed
A proclamation for Career Technical Education Month was signed at Choctaw Central High School’s Career & Technical Education Center (C-TEC) in Choctaw. Career Technical Education Month is a public awareness campaign in February that celebrates the value of Career & Technical Education as it prepares students for high-wage, high-demand careers & covers many different fields. Currently, C-TEC offers courses in agriculture science, carpentry/construction, information technology, welding, engineering, work-based learning, health sciences, & culinary arts. CTEC students also participate in clubs & organizations, such as Future Farmers of America, National Technical Honor Society, DECA, HOSA, Skills USA, & Solar Car.

2ND GRADE: Inorganic Chemistry - Mylah Gibson, 1st place; Plant Science - A'rix McMillan, 2nd place.
3RD GRADE: Math & Systems Software - Lazethan Billy, 1st place.
4TH GRADE: Earth & Environmental Science - Cameron Gibson, 4th place.
5TH GRADE: Biochemistry - Xanaeya Chapman, 1st place; Inorganic Chemistry - Mamie Sam, 3rd place; Math & Systems Software - Karahdee Dan, 1st place; Plant Science - Zachary Polk, 5th place.
On Tuesday, April 13, CCHS seniors participating in powerlifting & baseball were honored. They included Leilani “Bo” Charlie, Charlita Gibson, Jaiden Thomas, Sierra Wallace, Kyler Jefferson, Trevell Vivians, Kearson Grisham, Jawarrick Hickman, Billie Isom, Cohen Keats, Speedy Lewis II, Tayshaun Thomas. Not pictured is Gage Wesley.
Neshoba Central Senior Nights
Senior Nights were held at Neshoba Central High School for Rocket baseball senior Ramie Harrison on Tuesday, April 20 & Lady Rocket softball seniors Ahlyric Ben, Elleigh Willis & Shante Beaulieu on Thursday, April 22. Chief Cyrus Ben joined families & friends as they participated in recognition ceremonies.

Farve Plays in MAIS All-Star Game
Iris Farve, a member of the 2021 Class AAA State Girls Basketball Champions Clinton Christian Academy Lady Warriors, participated in the 2021 Mid-South Association of Independent Schools (MAIS) All-Star Basketball Game on March 11 at the Jackson Preparatory School Gymnasium. Farve scored four points for the Blue Team as they defeated the White Team 90-64. In attendance were family members, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Standing Pine Tribal Council Member Loriann Ahshapanek.

CCHS Powerlifters Head to North State
Members of the Choctaw Central High School powerlifting team participated in the 2021 MHSAA Class II North Powerlifting Championships on March 19-20 at Ripley High School in Ripley. Prior to their departure, the team received good luck gifts from Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. Pictured above, front row from left to right, are Leilani Charlie, Gage Wesley, Sierra Wallace, Jaiden Thomas; back row, Kyler Jefferson, Coach Ed Routh, Chief Ben, Catherine Jim, & Coach Amanda Reed.

CCHS Winter Guard Competes in Jackson
The Choctaw Central High School Winter Guard members recently competed in the Mississippi Indoor Association Championships on March 27 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson. Prior to their departure, the team was presented good luck gifts compliments of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. Winter Guard members include, front row from left to right, Kaegan Henry, Iysiahs York, Treavor Frazier, Arionna Dixon, Brannon Jim, Dylan Stephens, Kajavion Dixon; back row, Kayden Johnson, Katelyn Taylor, Natayah Anderson, Kaiden Anderson, Isley Mingo, & Alex Wishork.

Students of the Month Honored
Congratulations to the Philadelphia Rotary Club’s Students of the Month recipients representing Choctaw Central High School. Pictured from left to right are Brannon Jim (February), Leilani Charlie (March) & Kearson Grisham (April).
The Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) classes are currently being held in Columbus and Choctaw—the only two sites available in the State of Mississippi. When the Choctaw Central High School principal asked Tribal member Shonda R. Wesley if she would like to become a facilitator for the class, Wesley admitted she didn’t know anything about coding, but accepted anyway. “I am glad I accepted because I see the students enjoy it very much,” said Wesley.

A native of the Pearl River Community and currently living in nearby Edinburg, Wesley said when they first started coding classes, the students were a little shy. But now they are beginning to ask questions. “I, myself, am learning with them. When they see me asking questions, they are beginning to ask questions themselves,” said Wesley. “They do reviews on Fridays. We just learned how to use string, FL statements, operators, For Loops and While Loops. We are now learning how to input random numbers.”

The students are working on creating a game. They have to create an out-guessing game using random numbers and Wesley thinks it is a great step up for these high school students. “Coding uses math and critical thinking. I believe it would help students develop and master those needed skills. Coding is challenging, but it is a great opportunity for anyone who wants to learn it. I wish coding had been offered to them sooner. I know I would have taken it back when I was in high school.”

Wesley has done a fantastic job facilitating the classroom while the students learn coding virtually. The class is scheduled to run through June 2021.

A 2010 graduate of Choctaw Central High School, Wesley attended and graduated from Meridian Community College in 2013 with an associate’s degree. In 2020, she graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. She is currently a graduate student and by May 2020, will receive her three-year non-renewable license to teach English. By December 2020, she will receive her five-year renewable license.

Wesley is the daughter of Deborah Tubby and the late Kenneth Wesley and step-daughter of Sandy Tubby. She has three sisters, three brothers, and nieces and nephews.

The Mississippi Coding Academies are part of a non-profit economic development and educational initiative sponsored by Innovate Mississippi, the Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Works program, Mississippi State University, and the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, in partnership with Hinds Community College, East Mississippi Community College and the Mississippi Community College Board.
NCCER Electrical Core Curriculum Class Honored

Tribal members enrolled in the National Center for Construction Education & Research (NCCER) Electrical Core Curriculum class were recently honored during a breakfast hosted by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben as he offered his appreciation for their work & determination in class.


“There are not enough people to do the type of job you are currently training for,” Chief Ben told the students.

According to NCCER News, there are currently not enough skilled electricians in the construction industry and, taking into consideration, there will be “potentially 300,000 Baby Boomers retiring,” more electricians are needed.

Nationwide, there is a gap for skilled labor, but the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians are tackling the problem locally as Chief Ben spoke about workforce development & the need for more trained & skilled workers. He offered his encouragement to the students to continue their education as they listened intently.

A supervisor recently stated more maintenance employees need this class to acquire the basic solid foundation of safety & communication. Another supervisor said he had more employees willing to attend the class but could not let all of them go, or they would be short-handed.

The NCCER core curriculum class is a prerequisite before going into any NCCER skills training such as HVAC, electrical, carpentry, welding, plumbing, etc. If you have never taken any NCCER classes before, you will need to take this class.

For more information about NCCER classes or to fill out an application & be placed on a waiting list, please contact Sarah Medlock at 601-663-7585 at the Office of Economic Development.

MDAH Completes Largest Repatriation of Native American Ancestors in State History

The Mississippi Department of Archives & History (MDAH) has transferred the remains of 403 Native Americans & 83 lots of burial objects to the Chickasaw Nation. This is the largest return of human remains in Mississippi history, & the first for MDAH.

“This repatriation is a huge milestone for our institution & our Tribal partners,” said MDAH director Katie Blount. “We are committed to the repatriation of human remains & cultural objects in the department’s archaeological collections.”

Since the 19th century, archaeological excavations have unearthed hundreds of the ancestral remains of people who once inhabited the state & whose cultures continue today. The passage of the 1990 Native American Graves Protection & Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) gave Native populations the right to claim ancestors & cultural objects in the care of institutions receiving federal funds.

Working closely with Tribal representatives & the National NAGPRA Program, the transfer of these human remains took place over the course of more than two years. MDAH sought guidance in preparing the remains for reburial, which will take place this year.

“The Chickasaw Nation has developed a strong working relationship with MDAH as a result of this repatriation,” said Amber Hood, Director of Historic Preservation & Repatriation, The Chickasaw Nation. “Caring for our ancestors is extremely important to us, & we appreciate the dedication & transparency their staff has shown throughout the consultation process.”

“It is important to remember that these are people, buried with items with strong cultural ties to their communities, the same way that people today might be laid to rest wearing a wedding band,” said Meg Cook, MDAH director of archaeology collections. “While these artifacts inform the archaeological record, it is our ethical & legal obligation to see that they are returned.”

MDAH is thankful for its volunteers, who hand sewed muslin bags that were used to carefully wrap each individual with their belongings. This material was purchased partly with funds from a National NAGRA Program grant.

For more information, email info@mdah.ms.gov. Learn more about NAGPRA at www.nps.gov/nagpra & nagpra.mdah.ms.gov.

NEW NAGPRA WEBSITE LAUNCHED

The MDAH has created a new website that prioritizes the repatriation of human remains & cultural items in the department’s archaeological collection. The website will inform the public about the NAGPRA & serve as a virtual platform for consultation with the department’s federally-recognized Tribal partners.

The website features NAGPRA collections updates, policies & procedures, & links to more information about the department’s Tribal partners. An interactive map shows the status of ongoing repatriations in Mississippi counties across the state. MDAH completed its first repatriation earlier this year.

The Choctaw Nation, Chickasaw Nation, & Muscogee (Creek) Nation generously provided images featured on the website. The Couchatta Tribe of Louisiana provided additional content.

“Our goal is to engage the public in NAGPRA & to provide information about our collections in a way that hasn’t been done before,” says Meg Cook, director of archaeology collections. “The most important part is remembering that these remains are people, & their families want to see that they are reburied.”

The website will feature internship opportunities, Tribal stories, collections updates, & repatriation progress. For more information visit the website at http://nagpra.mdah.ms.gov.
Shumake; brothers, Genis Shu
ters, Samaria Miller & Sharaya
Sherry Johnson Shumake; sis
nis Charles Shumake, Sr. &
ter, Lainey Isaac; parents, Ge
make; 5 aunts & 4 uncles.
Ruben & Janie Denson Shu
Harry & Dora Sockey Johnson,
Zylen Shumake; grandparents,
& Ambrosia Isaac; nephew,
her daughters, Payden Martin
their events & activities.
She was caring, helpful, & always put family
She was outgoing, friendly,
pervisor at Pearl River Resort.
She was a Casino Porter Su
was held on Saturday,
April 3, 2021, at Standing Pine Community
Cemetery. Rev. Shelly Peoples
Chapel Funeral Services was in
charge of arrangements.
Ms. Shumake passed away on
February 24 in Brandon.
She was a Casino Porter Su
was held on Saturday,
April 3, 2021, at Standing Pine Community
Cemetery. Rev. Shelly Peoples
Chapel Funeral Services was in
charge of arrangements.
Miss Isaac passed away on
February 24 in Brandon.
She was in the second grade
at Standing Pine Elementary
School. She enjoyed making
TikTok & YouTube videos,
playing with dolls & slime,
dressing up, joking with her
father, shopping, sleepovers
at her grandparents house, &
playing with her sister & cous
She was full of love &
laughter & protected her sister.
She is preceded in death by
her mother, Tamaria Shumake;
sister, Payden Martin; & cous
in, Zylene Shumake.
Survivors include her father,
Manuel Isaac; sister, Lain
ey Isaac; grandparents, Genis
Charles Shumake, Sr. & Sherry
Johnson Shumake, Ken & Al
ice Isaac; & a host of aunts, un
cles, great-aunts, great-uncles,
relatives, & friends.

AMBROSIA BROOKE
ITCHOKASH CHITO ISAAC
Graveside service for
Ambrosia Brooke Itcho-
kash Chito Isaac, 8, was
held on Saturday,
April 3, 2021, at Standing Pine Community
Cemetery. Rev. Shelly Peoples
Chapel Funeral Services was in
charge of arrangements.
Mr. Shumake passed away on
February 24 in Brandon.
He attended Pearl River
Head Start & loved his teach
He was preceded in death by
his grandfather, Billy McMil
; & cousins, Ambrosia Isaac & Ka
zelynn McMillan.
Survivors include his par
ents, Sharaya Shumake & By
Ron McMillan; brother, Zaiden
Trey Clemmons; grandparents,
Genis Charles Shumake, Sr. &
Sherry Johnson Shumake, Ro
chella Tubby; 2 aunts, 6 uncles
& a host of relatives & friends.

ZYLEN BRYCE SHUMAKE
Graveside service for
Zylen Bryce Shu
5, was held on Satu
April 3, 2021, at Standing Pine Community
Cemetery. Rev. Shelly Peoples
Chapel Funeral Services was in
charge of arrangements.
Mr. Shumake passed away on
February 24 in Brandon.
He attended Pearl River
Head Start & loved his teacher Mrs. Ruby. He was lively &
outgoing & enjoyed playing with his cousins & being with
family. He also enjoyed going to Wal-Mart & playing with
Spider-Man toys.
He is preceded in death by
his grandfather, Billy McMil
; aunt, Tamaria Shumake; &
cousins, Ambrosia Isaac & Ka
zelynn McMillan.
Survivors include his par
ents, Sharaya Shumake & By
Ron McMillan; brother, Zaiden
Trey Clemmons; grandparents,
Genis Charles Shumake, Sr. &
Sherry Johnson Shumake, Ro
chella Tubby; 2 aunts, 6 uncles
& a host of relatives & friends.

MATTIE KAYE WILLIS DIXON
Memorial service for
Mattie Kaye Willis Dix
on, 66, was held on Fri
day, March 12, 2021, at John E. Stephens
Chapel. John E. Stephens
Chapel Funeral Services was in
charge of arrangements.
Mrs. Dixon passed away on
March 2 at Golden Triangle
Baptist Memorial Hospital in
Columbus.
She enjoyed doing beadwork,
cooking & reading. She was a
former Tribal Council member,
entrepreneur, assistant teacher,
Pearl River Resort personnel,
& Wal-Mart associate.
She is preceded in death by
her parents, Louie & Leona
Tubby Willis; an infant daugh
ter; sisters, Vera Willis & Sän
dra Billy; & brothers, Robert
Stoliby, Larry Willis & Barry
Glen Willis.
Survivors include her hus
band, Roy Dixon; daughters,
Jacqueline Dixon & Tonya
(Shafler) Wilder; sisters, Donna
Burr & Tammy Willis; brother,
Lou Martin Willis; 5 grandchil
dren, & a host of nieces, neph
ews, relatives, & friends.

SHERRY MAE THOMPSON
GREEVES
Graveside service for
Sherry Mae Thomp
Greaves, 61, was held on TUESDAY,
March 9, 2021, at Bogue Chit
John E. Stephens Chapel Fu
neral Services was in charge of
arrangements.
Mrs. Greaves passed away
on March 3 at Golden Triangle
Baptist Memorial Hospital in

Welcome To
MANIH WAYA INDIAN
Mennonite Church
10341 Road 789
Philadelphia, MS 39350
Sunday Service: 10:00 a.m.
Pastor Patrick Evans

Come Worship with us
Macedonia Baptist Church
130 Campus Drive
Columbus, MS 39057
SUNDAY SCHEDULE
10:00 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
5:00 p.m. Evening Service
1st Sunday Service: 4:00 p.m.
Pastor: Rev. Samuel Dixon

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are
really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” – John 18:30-32

Come Join Us...
Christian Center
SUNDAY 10:00 a.m.
WEDNESDAY 6:00 p.m.
278 Black Jack Road
Choctaw, MS 39350
601-389-5446
Pastor Thomas Ben

Spirit of Life
Mennonite Church
10341 Road 789
Philadelphia, MS 39350
Sunday Service: 10:00 a.m.
Pastor Patrick Evans

Baptist Memorial Hospital in
Isaac, Doris Billie, & Judy Mc Isaac; sisters, Kathy Isaac, Cira Clarissa Crowell; son, Stephen Ward Clerk at the Choctaw Medical Center in Meridian. March 7 at Anderson Regional General Services was in charge of arrangements. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements. Mr. Williams passed away on March 8 at his residence. He was a Beverage Custodian at Pearl River Resort & a Stocker at Wal-Mart in Carthage. He enjoyed being with family & friends, making people laugh, playing sports, & being with his son. He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Henry & Melba Williams, Gene W. Joe, Sr.; & a great-grandmother, Annie Laura Alex. Survivors include his parents, Jonathan Williams & Eugenia Joe Thomas; son, Lawson Williams; daughters, Kaysa Johnson & Khyal Johnson; sisters, Maleighia Joe, Maiya Joe, Ashleigh Thomas, Brooke Thomas, Trisha Phillips, & Zenetta Williams; brothers, Eli Joe, Rodrick Thomas, Kenneth Thomas, Jr., Anthony Phillips, & Kevin Alex; grandmother, Ava Willis; special companion, Lashundra Williams; an aunt, 3 uncles, great-aunt, 2 nephews, & a host of relatives & friends.

Graveside service for Tasha Diane Sam, 48, was held on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at Conehatta Community Cemetery. Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements. Ms. Sam passed away on March 12 at Rush Foundation Hospital in Meridian. She is preceded in death by her parents, Edward Sam & Lou Jane Lewis; & a sister, Sharon Sam. She was employed with the Conehatta Early Childhood Center & worked with the head start program for 27 years. Survivors include her sisters, Karren Sam & Kathy Sam; & a host of relatives & friends.

Sanpella Jefferson


Mrs. Jefferson passed away on March 11 at her residence. She enjoyed being with family & friends, helping people & singing hymns.

She is preceded in death by her parents, John F. & Merdis Denson; & a nephew. Survivors include her husband, Kenneth Jefferson; sister, Sindy Lewis; half-sister, Helen Farmer; brother, Dudley Denson; half-brother, Don Gibson; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Peyton Jayce Williams

Graveside service for Peyton Jayce Williams, 25, was held on Friday, March 12, 2021, at St. Catherine Catholic Cemetery in Conehatta. Pastor Thomas Ben officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Williams passed away on March 8 at his residence.

He was a Beverage Custodian at Pearl River Resort & a Stocker at Wal-Mart in Carthage. He enjoyed being with family & friends, making people laugh, playing sports, & being with his son.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Henry & Melba Williams, Gene W. Joe, Sr.; & a great-grandmother, Annie Laura Alex.

Survivors include his parents, Jonathan Williams & Eugenia Joe Thomas; son, Lawson Williams; daughters, Kaysa Johnson & Khyal Johnson; sisters, Maleighia Joe, Maiya Joe, Ashleigh Thomas, Brooke Thomas, Trisha Phillips, & Zenetta Williams; brothers, Eli Joe, Rodrick Thomas, Kenneth Thomas, Jr., Anthony Phillips, & Kevin Alex; grandmother, Ava Willis; special companion, Lashundra Williams; an aunt, 3 uncles, great-aunt, 2 nephews, & a host of relatives & friends.

Ina Mae Isaac Solomon

Graveside service for Ina Mae Isaac Solomon, 64, was held on Tuesday, March 16, 2021, at Holy Rosary Catholic Cemetery in Tucker. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Solomon passed away on March 7 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian. She spent a majority of her life as an LPN. She was an ER Ward Clerk at the Choctaw Health Center until her retirement. She enjoyed spending time with her family, dining out, & going to the casino, flea market & Dirt Cheap.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Easton Robert Thompson & Gladys Eve Steve John; stepfather, Hamilton John; & brothers, Winfred Morris & Robert Wayne Thompson.

Survivors include her husband, Ian Greaves, Sr.; daughters, Sasha Willis & Hilary Bey; son, Ian Greaves, Jr.; sisters, Cynthia Wallace, Joanne Thompson & Naomi Thompson; brothers, Kevin Thompson, Steve John & Easton Thompson, Jr.; 8 grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Sanpella Jefferson


Mrs. Jefferson passed away on March 11 at her residence.

She enjoyed being with family & friends, helping people & singing hymns.

She is preceded in death by her parents, John F. & Merdis Denson; & a nephew.

Survivors include her husband, Kenneth Jefferson; sister, Sindy Lewis; half-sister, Helen Farmer; brother, Dudley Denson; half-brother, Don Gibson; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Tasha Diane Sam

Graveside service for Tasha Diane Sam, 48, was held on Thursday, March 18, 2021, at Conehatta Community Cemetery. Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Sam passed away on March 12 at Rush Foundation Hospital in Meridian.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Edward Sam & Lou Jane Lewis; & a sister, Sharon Sam.

She was employed with the Conehatta Early Childhood Center & worked with the head start program for 27 years.

Survivors include her sisters, Karren Sam & Kathy Sam; & a host of relatives & friends.
shakers & beaded keychains.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Rueben & Janie Denise Shumake; daughter, Tamaria Shumake; sisters, Jeanell Anderson & Anita Anderson; brother, Thurman Shumake; & 3 grandchildren.

Survivors include daughters, Samaria Miller & Sharaya Shumake; son, Genis Charles Shumake, Jr.; sisters, Norma Thompson Hall, Pearlie Thompson & Eleanor Chickaway; 11 grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**ONEVA LOUISE WILLIS**

Graveside service for Oneva Louise Willis, 46, was held on Friday, April 2, 2021, at Standing Pine Community Cemetery. Bro. Willie Solomon, Jr. officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Willis passed away on March 28 at her residence.

She enjoyed being with family, attending ball games, traveling, playing games on her phone, listening to music, & cooking.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Aldridge Sr. & Emma Williams Willis; brother, Aldridge Willis, Jr.; a grandchild & a niece.

Survivors include her husband, Jimmy Willis; daughters, Shanii John, Shanitra John & Jalissa Willis; son, Jamison Williams; sister, Tracey Waiter; 6 grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**ANNIE SUE CHICKAWAY**

Graveside service for Annie Sue Chickaway, 41, was held on Thursday, April 1, 2021, at Holy Rosary Catholic Cemetery. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Chickaway passed away on March 29 at Merit Health Central in Jackson.

She enjoyed being on Facebook, traveling & listening to music.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Stevie & Judy Mingo Chickaway; grandparents, Mary Chickaway, David son & Ossie Joe Mingo; 4 aunts & 3 uncles.

Survivors include her brother, Nehemiah Chickaway; 4 aunts, 5 nieces, 5 nephews, & a host of relatives & friends.

**CORDARIO MAURICE WILLIS**

Graveside service for Cordario Maurice Willis, 34, was held on Monday, April 5, 2021, at Old Mt. Zion Cemetery in Red Water. Deacon Gary Chickaway & Rev. Carl Wilson officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Willis passed away on March 31 in Choctaw, MS.

He was employed at Pearl River Resort as a Table Games Dealer. He enjoyed being with family & friends, fishing, hunting, working on vehicles, & being a fan of Superman & the Florida Gators.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Morris Warwick Willis, Sr. & Sally Jane Dixson; & brothers, Jeremy Ben & Morris Willis, Jr.

Survivors include his daughter, Kaylynn Eve Willis; step-sons, Jarred Kent Jim & Daunte Gage Smith; sisters, Alicia Wheeler, Doris Ben, Melinda D. Ben & Mari Elaine Willis; brother, Samuel John; special companion, Karen Wilson; an aunt, uncle, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**EILEEN BEN BILLIE**

Graveside service for Eileen Ben Billie, 85, was held on Sunday, April 11, 2021, at Hope Indian Baptist Cemetery in Pearl River. Rev. Charles Doby Henry & Pastor Thomas Ben officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Billie passed away on April 6 at University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

She was a member of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Tucker. She worked various jobs until she become a homemaker. She enjoyed gardening, canning, yard sales, cleaning, sewing, traveling, making homemade jams, trying her luck at the casinos with her sister, & preparing delicious meals.

She loved being with family, friends & godchildren.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Lee & Mable Billie; brother, Richard Lee Wilson; 3 aunts & 4 uncles.

Survivors include his mother, Sandra Wesley; father, Jody Solomon; Jr.; aunt/mother, Gloria Wilson; daughter, Gennyvacia Willis; sisters, Twyla York, Denitra Wilson, Ashley Wesley, Kristen Wesley, Darrion Wesley, Tamela Solomon, & Panesha Mingi; brothers, Ryland Wesley, Kendrick Wesley, Jamie Wesley, Jody Solomon, Jr., Winter.
Solomon, Ichukash Solomon, Yopalakiyo Solomon, & Leon Lewis; an aunt, 4 uncles, & a host of relatives & friends.

**SYLVIA LYNN JOHNSON**

Graveside service for Sylvia Lynn Johnson, 54, was held on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, at Conehatta Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Johnson passed away on April 10 at her residence. She held various positions from instructional aide to Home & Family Services Coordinator. She was known for her humor, kindness & compassion for her students. She loved sewing traditional attire, quilts & household items, reading John Grisham novels, listening & singing Choctaw hymns, & being with her family.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Goldman & Mellie Dixon Jefferson; sisters, Cindy Jefferson & Mary Sue Jefferson; & brothers, Bobby Jefferson & Robert Jefferson.

Survivors include her daughters, Sylendra Fireplace, Meloni Johnson & Fallon Johnson; son, Billy Johnson, Jr.; sister, Minnie Shoemake; brother, Leran Jefferson, Sr.; 6 grandchildren, & a host of relatives & friends.

**CONNIE SUE JIM CHARLIE**

Graveside service for Connie Sue Jim Charlie, 56, was held on Friday, April 16, 2021, at Simon Isaac Cemetery in Pearl River. Bro. Shelly Peoples officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Charlie passed away on April 10 at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson.

She attended Old Canaan Baptist Church & enjoyed doing beadwork, quilting, socializing, listening to church services on the radio, sewing, & going to the Choctaw Elderly Activity Center.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Benjamin & Korene Tubby Mitchell; sons, Daniel Carl Willis, Bruce Eric Willis & Jeffery Willis; sisters, Judy Mitch Gibson, Patricia Mitch Mizell, Lena Mitch, & Marilyn Mitch Tubby; brothers, Bobby Mitch, Ramsey Carl Mitch & Benny Mitch, Sr.; & a grandson.

Survivors include her daughters, Lora Mitch Orduño, Karen Bryant-Lewis, & Florence Hodges; sons, Naveon Willis & Alan J. Willis; a grandson she raised as a son, Eric Bryce Willis; sisters, Aline M. Hickman, Mageline Truss, & Nannie Thibodeaux; a brother, Billy Mitch; 28 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**ROBERT LAYTON ISAAC, JR.**

Graveside service for Robert Layton Isaac, Jr., 39, was held on Thursday, April 22, 2021, at Isaac Cemetery in Pearl River. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Isaac passed away on April 17 at his residence.

He was employed with Tribal Landscaping & enjoyed fishing, playing stickball & softball, grilling, & being a fan of the Dallas Cowboys & Texas Longhorns.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Charles Isaac, Nathan & Eula Hickman Thompson; brother, Eric Isaac; 4 aunts & 6 uncles.

Survivors include daughters, Becca Giannaylnal Isaac & Kayleigh Elyse Isaac; sons, Azaynlon Houston Hickman, Albert Charles Isaac & Layton Alaric Isaac; parents, Robert Layton Isaac, Sr. & Sharon Thompson Isaac; sister, Regina Isaac; brothers, Shane Isaac & Ricky Isaac; grandmother, Winnie Isaac; special friend, Patricia Lynn Hickman Isaac; 4 aunts, 3 uncles & a host of relatives & friends.
Scholastic Writing Awards Program Honors Students

This has been an exciting year for Mississippi students who participated in the Scholastic Writing Awards Program. As schools, students, & teachers accommodated safety measures & other changes necessitated by COVID-19, creativity was abundant.

There were 808 creative writing entries from 225 students throughout the state, and 314 Scholastic Writing Awards were presented, according to Sally Birdsall, the Mississippi affiliate Scholastic administrator for the Eudora Welty Foundation & Mississippi Department of Archives & History.

Meka Willis, a sophomore at the Mississippi School for the Blind, was awarded a Silver Key in the Short Story category for her work titled Amethyst Eyes.

As with other aspects of life during Coronavirus time, the methods of presenting awards & recognizing the outstanding student writers was different this year, as they were last year. Instead of an awards ceremony at the Eudora Welty House and Garden, certificates & other remembrances were mailed to students. Gold & Silver Key winners will receive Scholastic key lapel pins, & each American Voices nominee will receive a copy of A Daring Life: A Biography of Eudora Welty by Carolyn J. Brown.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards program began in 1923 and has grown to be one of the longest-running, most prestigious recognition programs in the U.S. in the visual & literary arts for creative teens. Students in grades 7-12 in public, independent, & home-school settings are encouraged to participate, according to Birdsall.

The Welty Foundation became the Mississippi affiliate to administer the Scholastic Writing Awards program in 2008, initially serving the Jackson metropolitan area & quickly expanding statewide. The Mississippi Museum of Art is the Mississippi affiliate for the Scholastic Art Awards program. The C Spire Foundation continues to be a generous sponsor of this special program.
**Tribes Partner For New Hotel Investment**

Three of the most successful Native American tribes in the Southeastern U.S. have entered into an investment partnership with DreamCatcher Hotels. The Seminole Tribe of Florida, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians & the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians have teamed with DreamCatcher to develop a high-end, AAA-rated Four Diamond hotel in Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

Located in a mecca of tourism & natural beauty, DreamCatcher Hotel – Pigeon Forge will become one of the top-rated & desired lodging properties within the Smoky Mountains.

“We are thrilled about our partnership with the Seminole Tribe of Florida, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians & the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians,” stated Zeke Cooper, President of DreamCatcher Franchise Development.

“The Pigeon Forge property launches a new milestone in our company, opening as the first hotel under our brand name. Our tribal partners share our bold vision of developing & investing in unique & innovative hospitality properties, located in areas we know people want to visit. We are excited & humbled by their investment & trust. Our goal is to create significant returns for each tribe’s members.”

The unprecedented partnership & investment add diversity to each of the tribes’ already-

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**CCHS Hosts 2021 Graduation Ceremony**

Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) held commencement ceremonies honoring 74 members of the Class of 2021 on Tuesday, May 18. Originally scheduled to take place at CCHS Warrior Stadium, inclement weather had moved the ceremony indoors into the school gymnasium in Choctaw.

CCHS Principal Alaric Keams welcomed the audience and offered introductions as members of the Choctaw Veterans Color Guard presented the flags of the United States and Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Pearl River Elementary School first grader Neyalih Dixon performed the National Anthem in Choctaw as senior Meloney Thames gave the invocation.

In his remarks to the graduates, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben said as they are ready to embark onto their next chapter, they should be proud of their heritage and history.

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**Official Tribal Election Results Released**

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Tribal Election Committee released official results of the June 8, 2021 Tribal Elections. Nine seats on the Tribal Council were decided with terms expiring in 2025.

Five incumbents were re-elected to another term (Kendall S. Wallace of Bogue Chitto, Hilda Nickey of Conehatta, Christopher Eaves of Crystal Ridge, Deborah Martin of Pearl River, and Loriann Ahshapanek of Standing Pine); three new members were elected (Angela S. Hundle of Bogue Chitto, Kent L. Wesley of Pearl River, and Demado C. Mingo of Tucker); and a former council member was elected (Gregory Shoemake of Conehatta).

Official election results, including absentee ballots, were certified on June 9 by the Tribal Election Committee and are listed below.

BOGUE CHITTO (including Henning, TN) - Gabriel N. Bell, 72; John L. Bell, Jr., 9; Tomika L. Bell, 29; Patricia Henry, 21; Donnie Hickman, Jr., see RESULTS, pg. 4 see HOTEL, pg. 4
Halito!

I want to take this moment to express my congratulations once again to the Class of 2021. Despite the continuing effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic that disrupted our routines and made us adjust to a new normal, these graduates stayed the course and kept on working hard to get to the finish line.

I am very proud of every Choctaw graduate from each high school and college. You have been an example to other students that no matter the hardship you face, you can do anything you put your all into. This is a milestone to be celebrated, and I hope you take a moment and look back and recognize how much you have learned, how much you have grown and how far you have come.

Parents, guardians, family members, and friends, you are also to be commended. Your support, love and care has been the strong foundation that has allowed your graduate to succeed. All of the sacrifices you have made over the years have been worth it. This is your moment to celebrate as well.

Whether you plan to further your education, head into the military or join the workforce, please know your Tribe stands with you as you embark on your next adventure in life.

I encourage you not to live in the past. Be thankful for the lessons learned and the memories made, but remember, your successes and accomplishments and desire for learning should not stop just because you are now a high school or college graduate. There are more successes for you to make, and there will always be more things for you to learn.

Graduation is but a chapter in the story of your life, not the end of the book. Turn the page and keep going. Always strive to do your best, work hard, but also make time for fun and rest along the way. God bless you all!

As the weather gets warmer, the days longer, and we begin to look forward to the fun days of summer, I encourage everyone to continue to follow CDC COVID-19 safety precautions. As more places become less restrictive and mask mandates are lessened, I ask that you continue to be cautious if you are unvaccinated.

Of course, the best option for yourself, your family, your community and your Tribe is to get vaccinated. The Choctaw Health Center continues to offer vaccinations to those 12 years of age and older. Contact Public Health Services at 601-389-4118 or 601-389-4109 to make a vaccination appointment.

On our Tribal lands, we are slowly returning to our “normal,” but we ask that we all take those precautions needed to keep each other safe from the COVID-19 virus. None of us want to go through what we as a Tribe have suffered through the last year. I urge you...
all to continue to be safe while enjoying the beautiful summer days ahead.

Like others, I am excited to see the return of stickball. Bracket Selection Night started us off. The State Games of Mississippi Kabotcha Toli tournament is June 16-19 at Warrior Stadium. Our Choctaw Video crew will be live streaming all the games this year.

Unity Walk will be Saturday, June 26. World Series Stickball will start Wednesday, July 7 with the Fallen Tushka Ceremony followed by the Women’s 35 & Over North/South Exhibition game. To close out this first night of games is the newly added Men’s 50 & Over North/South Exhibition game.

This should be a great night to start off the 2021 World Series Stickball tournament!

Chi Yakokilih!

Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief

Facility Officially Named Choctaw Sportsplex

The multi-sport complex at Lake Pushmataha, located at 277 Blackjack Road in Choctaw, was officially named Choctaw Sportsplex as the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians hosted a brief ceremony unveiling the signage on Monday, May 24. In addition to new sports fields, ribbon cutting ceremonies were held for new attractions to the sportsplex - a new children’s playground and a water splash pad. A feature of the playground is being ADA-compliant so children with disabilities can enjoy all the fun the playground offers. In attendance for the opening were Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, several members of the Choctaw Tribal Council, 2019-2021 Choctaw Indian Princess Elisah Jimmie, Construction Management officials, Tribal Recreation personnel, and members of the Tribal communities. It was also opening night of Tribal Recreation youth games after being cancelled last year due to the COVID-19 restrictions.

Chief Ben Recipient of GIVE Award

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, pictured center, was named a recipient of the Governor’s Initiative for Volunteer Excellence (GIVE) Award. First Lady of Mississippi Elee Reeves, pictured right, & Monica Ritchie, Executive Director of Volunteer Mississippi, made the presentation to Chief Ben as he was recognized for “Outstanding Community Building by a Public Servant” for the many hours of volunteer work he has done with youth, elders, & the church community. In his award announcement, the organization stated, “Chief Cyrus Ben is a man who embodies the selfless characteristics of a servant leader, inspiring the many people he touches with his giving spirit.”
Pearl River Resort Updates Mask Policy

In compliance with CDC and Choctaw Health Center Guidelines, Pearl River Resort has updated its mask policy. Effective at 12:00 a.m. on Friday, June 4th, Pearl River Resort properties and its sister casino, Bok Homa Casino in Sandersville, Mississippi, will no longer require “fully vaccinated” guests to wear face coverings.

GAMING PROPERTIES

Guests will be asked to provide proof of vaccination when entering the Silver Star, Golden Moon or Bok Homa Casino. That proof may be their vaccination card, a copy of their card, or a photo of their card on their smart phone.

If a guest is unable to show proof of vaccination, they will be required to wear a mask on property.

Pearl River Resort and Bok Homa Casino will continue their in-house safety protocols, including temperature screening and property cleaning procedures. The Resort invested over half a million dollars in safety equipment and technology that will remain in place.

NON-GAMING PROPERTIES

 Masks are also optional for fully vaccinated individuals visiting the Resort’s non-gaming properties: Dancing Rabbit Golf Course, Dancing Rabbit Inn and Geyer Falls Water Theme Park. Guests may be asked to show proof of vaccination.

For more information on Pearl River Resort’s properties, call 1.866.447.3275 or visit www.pearlriverresort.com.

HOTEL .......................................................... continued from page one

successful economic development portfolios. From gaming & hospitality properties to cattle farms & construction firms, the tribes are known for their business expertise & accomplishments. Revenue generated from their investment will financially benefit their tribal operations & members for generations to come.

“On behalf of the Tribal Council of the Seminole Tribe of Florida, I’m excited to be part of this historic development, which I am confident will continue to secure the economic future of our Tribal Members & drive economic prosperity for many years to come,” stated Chairman Marcellus Osceola of the Seminole Tribe of Florida. “The Seminole Tribe has deep experience in owning & operating hotels, & we are very familiar with Pigeon Forge, a market that attracts millions of vacationers, conventions, weddings & athletic tournaments each year.”

According to Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, although this investment was not on Choctaw lands, it still offers an opportunity for all the partnering tribes to diversify their business portfolios.

“This is yet another step in Choctaw self-determination. With this capital investment, our goal is to generate revenue to benefit the tribe as a whole. As our Tribe grows, so should our business interests.”

Pigeon Forge is an exciting locale for this investment. Tourism to the area escalated before the pandemic & analysts now predict a quick return of tourist activity to pre-pandemic levels.

The property features 12,000 square feet of meeting & convention space, an idyllic rooftop restaurant & lounge, & 200 guest rooms. The hotel site is strategically located within the heart of dining, shopping & excursion options while also sitting adjacent to the Leconte Center & the Cal Ripken Baseball/Softball Experience.

“The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians are proud to partner with our sister tribes, The Seminole Tribe of Florida & the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians on this inaugural project,” said Principal Chief Richie Sneed of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. “It is our hope that this will be but one of many economic development projects our tribes can partner on, helping to secure the financial future of our tribes. We are grateful for the opportunity as well as the partnership with DreamCatcher as the project developer.”

DreamCatcher develops high-end affordable hotels in choice tourism destinations & Pigeon Forge fits perfectly into that model. DreamCatcher is proud of its long history of successful business relationships with various Native American tribes & is excited to bring these three leaders together to create this first-time partnership.

DreamCatcher Hotel – Pigeon Forge is the first in a series of new branded hotels DreamCatcher intends to franchise over the next five years. The property will open in the summer of 2023.

RESULTS .......................................................... continued from page one

42; Angela S. Hundley, 221; Randy Lee Jim, 42; Jackie Morris, 47; Michael Morris, 41; Norman D. Samuel, Jr., 58; Garrick Stoloby, 13; Gabriel K. Thompson, 15; incumbent Kendall S. Wallace, 289; and Elyse Willis, 77.

CONEHATTA - Max M. Anderson, 136; incumbent Tarina Kay Anderson, 152; Emerson Joe Billy, 55; Troy L. Chickaway, 100; Shaun Grant, 139; Eric Hickman, 51; incumbent Hilda Nickley, 180; and Gregory Shoemaker, 159.

CRYSTAL RIDGE - Leola Clark, 5; incumbent Christopher Eaves, 61; Joseph Wesley, 17; and Tim G. Willis, 2.

PEARL RIVER - Robert D. Ben, 78; William Comby, III, 25; Oretta Conrad, 52; Robert Garcia, Jr., 47; Martha Henry, 21; Jimmy Jim, 45; Michele Jefferson Jim, 6; Janis D. Jimmie, 112; Kyle C. John, 89; incumbent Deborah Martin, 261; Brian Mask, 57; incumbent Barry McMillan, 161; Lola McMillan, 134; Austin K. Tubby, 23; Lakeishia Wallace, 101; Barbara Wesley, 63; Kent L. Wesley, 239; Velma Williams, 36; Jenniffer Willis, 78; and Stella York Willis, 72.

STANDING PINE - incumbent Lorni Ahshapnek, 211; Jaric Anderson, 44; and LaLania D. Denson, 94.

TUCKER - Lisa Michele Charlie, 21; Lee R. Chickaway, 2; Linda McMillan, 56; Demado C. Mingo, 104; Otis Mingo, 12; Kevin Taylor, Sr., 30; and incumbent Dorothy B. Wilson, 103.
The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians held a wreath laying ceremony at the Choc-taw Veterans Memorial Wall in Choctaw to commemorate Memorial Day on Friday, May 28.

Veterans, families of veterans and Tribal officials remembered those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country while honoring U.S. military personnel who served or currently are serving our nation with pride.

“Freedom is not free,” said 2019-2021 Choctaw Indian Princess Elisah Monique Jimmie, who also served as emcee. “We gather together this morning as we remember the old saying that freedom is not free.”

Memorial Day Ceremony
The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians held a wreath laying ceremony at the Choctaw Veterans Memorial Wall in Choctaw to commemorate Memorial Day on Friday, May 28. Veterans, families of veterans and Tribal officials remembered those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our country while honoring U.S. military personnel who served or currently are serving our nation with pride.

“We gather together this morning as we remember the old saying that freedom is not free,” said 2019-2021 Choctaw Indian Princess Elisah Monique Jimmie, who also served as emcee. “It is my hope that we never forget our military men and women, past & present, and may we continue to honor their service.”

Members of the Choctaw Veterans Color Guard presented the American & Tribal flags as Darien Tubby sang the National Anthem in Choctaw. Pastor Thomas Ben of the Spirit of Life Christian Center delivered the invocation.

Pre-fair season ticket sales are currently underway for the 71st Choctaw Indian Fair (CIF), scheduled for July 14-17, 2021, in Choctaw, MS.

Tickets are available at the following Pearl River Resort properties: Provisions Shop at the Golden Moon Casino and The Logo Shop at Silver Star Casino. Both shops are open 24 hours/7 days per week.

Only season tickets will be sold during the pre-fair ticket sale. Cost of an adult season ticket is $20 (18 years or older); student season ticket is $10 (17 years or younger).

Pre-fair ticket sales is an incentive period for enrolled members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to benefit from the Pearl River Resort Tribal Membership Discount Program. Tribal members with proof of enrollment may receive a 20 percent discount on adult and student season tickets during pre-fair sale dates only.

Proof of enrollment accepted include: Tribal ID Cards, CDIB letter/cards, CHC Face Sheet (with Tribal enrollment number clearly listed.)

Final day to take advantage of this special is Tuesday, July 13, at 12:00 a.m. There is no limit on the number of tickets purchased per person.

Non-enrolled MBCI Tribal members may also take advantage of the pre-fair ticket sale by purchasing tickets in advance at regular price and beat the ticket lines during the official Choctaw Indian Fair dates, July 14-17.

Beginning July 14-17, the Provisions Shop at Golden Moon and The Logo Shop at Silver Star will continue to sell CIF season tickets at regular price and day tickets will be available for purchase.

Adult day ticket is $12 (18 years or older); student day ticket is $7 (17 years or younger).

For more information, contact Fonda Goss, PRR Retail Supervisor, at 601-504-8729.

MBCI enrolled Tribal Elders (ages 57 or older) qualify for a free special edition Choctaw Indian Fair Season Ticket, courtesy of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. CIF Elderly Season Tickets may be picked up at the Choctaw Elderly Nutrition Program-Reception Office beginning Monday, June 28 at 10:00 a.m., until Friday, July 16 at 4:30 p.m.

Proof of eligibility includes: CHC Face Sheet (clearly listing CDIB and date of birth), Tribal ID Card, birth certificate, state issued driver’s license, or other government or state issued document listing date of birth will be accepted.

Tribe Hosts Memorial Day Ceremony
Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben offered his remarks as he said we must always remember that we are blessed to have freedom because of the brave men and women who paid that ultimate price for the love of their country and communities.

“Let us always lift those families up when their loved ones have been lost in service. They are mourning and going through the healing of losing their loved ones. To the family members of those that served, I thank you because it was also a sacrifice for you and your family,” said Chief Ben.

Tribal member Chief Master Sergeant Ricky D. Alex of the U.S. Air Force, ANG served as guest speaker as he told those in attendance that Memorial Day serves as a day of remembrance and reflection for fallen military personnel.

“For many families, it is a day that brings back painful feelings for a loved one they have lost and it also brings a time of reflection of what could have been. Too many mothers, fathers, siblings, and children feel the immense weight of seeing an empty chair around,” said Alex. “Please join me in recognizing those family members here today that have lost a loved one in service. Your courage and grace after such unimaginable loss are inspiring.”

With young individuals choosing to enlist for military service, Alex said he recently had a discussion with one of his sons on his future in the military, but it also brings a sense of fear of what could happen.

“This is the first time I cannot make my child’s choice for him and it scares me that I will not be there to protect him or make those critical last minute decisions. I have great faith in him and hope he uses his training, education and instincts to his utmost ability,” said Alex. “If he decides to join the military, his mom and I will hold him tight, tell him that we love him and hold his head up high and be proud of himself and his heritage.”

Alex added there are brave accounts of heroes who can no longer speak for themselves and it is up to us to honor their service and memory.

“The harsh reality of war and military service in general is that not everyone will make it home. Let us honor the memory of our heroes no longer with us. Let us strive to live up to the example set by such selfless acts each and everyday.”

Chief Ben, Princess Jimmie, Choctaw Veterans Color Guard members Kent Wesley (Marines) and Franklin Hickman (Navy), Chief Master Sergeant Alex, and Choctaw Veterans Affairs Director Sammie Wilson (Marines) laid the ceremonial wreath at the base of the memorial as they observed a moment of silence.

Tribal Protective Services conducted a 21-gun salute, followed by the performance of Taps by Kelley Sockey on the hill overlooking the memorial to conclude the ceremony.
National Nurses Week Observed

In observance of National Nurses Week May 6-12, the nurses at the Choctaw Residential Center were honored with a cake and trays of cookies courtesy of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. Nurses Week is an annual celebration of nurses worldwide for the work they do for others. The week allows people the chance to acknowledge the nurses in their lives & provides an opportunity to thank nurses as a whole for the work they’ve done.

National Police Week Observed

In observance of National Police Week May 9-15, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben delivered trays of cookies as a token of appreciation to the officers of Choctaw Detention, Choctaw Police Department and Choctaw Wildlife & Parks Department.

COVID-19 Vaccine Available for Everyone Ages 12 and Up

Stopping COVID-19 requires using all available tools, including vaccination. Vaccines are now available for ages 12 and up!

Is the vaccine safe for my child? YES

Vaccines have been shown to be safe and effective in trials of youth ages 12-15, including Native American youth.

COVID-19 vaccines prevent people from getting severely sick with COVID-19

COVID-19 vaccines approved for use in the U.S. have been shown in large trials to be safe and effective. During the trials, youth who got the COVID-19 vaccine were protected from COVID-19 disease.

Like other vaccines used in the U.S., COVID-19 vaccines may cause temporary side effects such as:

- soreness where the shot is given
- chills or fever
- headache
- muscle or joint pain
- nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- tiredness

Side effects are normal and common for any vaccine. For vaccines with two doses, people experience more intense side effects with the second dose. Side effects go away within a few days. If there are concerns about side effects, contact a healthcare provider.

Vaccinating youth helps bring the crisis to an end

Many years of work on vaccines made it possible for scientists to develop COVID-19 vaccines soon after the pandemic began. Vaccines must go through all required steps to prove they are safe and effective before they are recommended.

Following the success of the adult vaccine trials, the trials began to enroll youth ages 12-15 years in October 2020. This age group responded very similarly to people 16-25 years of age, and none of the youth who got the vaccine got sick with COVID-19.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has authorized COVID-19 vaccine for youth 12-15 years. Trials with children 11 years and younger are ongoing. COVID-19 vaccines are an important tool we can use to end this crisis.

For more information on COVID-19 vaccine development: CDC.gov/coronavirus

Recognize the Warning Signs of Suicide

Fortunately, there are warning signs you can identify and act upon to prevent a suicide attempt or completion.

Warning signs:

- Suicide talk
- A past suicide attempt or gesture
- Depressed mood or irritability
- Drug/alcohol experimentation or use
- Serious family problems and/or fights
- Traumatic loss of a sibling, parent, friend, or pet.
- Aggressive or impulsive behavior
- Dangerous, risk-taking behavior
- Withdrawal from others
- School problems (fights, conflicts with teachers or peers, being bullied)
- Fear of humiliation or punishment
- Chronic feelings of rejection
- Hopelessness about the future
- Giving away prized possessions
- Preoccupation with death and dying

A message from:

Choctaw Public Safety 601-389-4150

For Crisis & Emergency during after hours, weekends, and holidays:

601-389-4400

Suicide Prevention Resource Center

Resources to support local health and care with the Coronavirus COVID-19

The Suicide Prevention Resource Center (SPRC) has compiled a selection of web pages and information sheets on mental health and coping with the effects of COVID-19. These resources are a selection from key organizations in the field. We will continue to update this list as new resources become available. https://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/COVID-19-Resources

COVID-19 Resources from SPRC Partners

For crisis counseling and support related to COVID-19, call the Disaster Distress Helpline (888-778-9500), or textTalkWithUs to 66746.

For those experiencing a suicide crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255), or text to 741741 for the Crisis Text Line.

The Lifeline is FREE, confidential, and always available. HELPLINE is based near, a friend, or yourself. Community crisis centers answer Lifeline calls, www.crisistextline.com

To schedule an appointment and for more information about Choose Behavioral Health services call, 601-389-4150

COVID-19 Resources from SPRC Partners

The National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention (Action Alliance) has developed a list of resources on self-care and for some specific populations.

The Zero Suicide Institute (ZSI) has developed a survey list for health care leaders and mental health professionals that addresses self-care needs.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has developed resources on suicide prevention, intervention, and crisis-focused health care services.

Education Development Center (EDC) has developed a list of resources related to health, mental health, and education.

Last updated: April 18, 2021
Educators Honored

Educators, school staff, & caregivers within the Choctaw Tribal Schools & Division of Early Childhood Education centers were recently honored by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & the Tribal Administration in celebration of Teachers Appreciation Week in May. Staff members were presented with trays of cookies & received words of appreciation for all they do in educating our Tribal children & students.
CTS Retirees Honored for Service

On Friday, May 21, the Choctaw Tribal Schools honored educators & school support staff who announced their retirement or completed their service as they were presented plaques & tokens of appreciation in recognition for their exemplary service & unwavering dedication to the students of the Choctaw Tribal Schools. Congratulations to the following educators & their years of service to the Choctaw Tribal Schools: Barb Willis (20 years), Billy Mack Wilbanks (5 years), Denise Johnson (14 years), Donnie McGivney (34 years), Frederick Lyons (4 years), James Luke (3 years), Janice Turner (15 years), Liddia Hughes (28 years), Mary Burt (29 years), Maxine Weathers (15 years), Ramona Adcock (13 years), Sadie “Becky” Wilson (37 years), Vickie Singletary (26 years), Waudine Brown (48 years), Cynthia Case (25 years), Gail Gray (11 years), Beth Chandler (3 years), Kate Dearing (19 years), Bertha Smith (14 years), Margaret Germany (8 years), & Jane McPhail (31 years).

Tribal Graduates Receive Backpacks

As a token of appreciation for educational success and achievement, Tribal member graduates of the Class of 2021 from high schools & higher learning institutions received a limited edition backpack embroidered with the Tribal seal, courtesy of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. Backpacks were distributed at the Office of Tribal Chief Parking Lot on May 25-26.
PFE Board Honors Parents of the Year

The Title I Parent & Family Engagement (PFE) Board met on Wednesday, May 12, 2021, at the Ayipa Café in Choctaw. Thirty-six Board members, guests, and staff enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared and served by the Culinary Arts students at C-TEC.

The PFE Board welcomed two new Board members - Gabriel Bell, representing the Bogue Chitto Community, and Demetra Williams, who is the Conehatta representative.

Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) Principal Alaric Keams recognized the top two students for 2021, Valedictorian Sierra Wallace and Salutatorian Brannon Jim.

PFE Chair Roseanna Thompson recognized May’s Outstanding Choctaw Educator, Nellie Sam. Nellie has worked for the Tribal Schools for over 20 years. Her work experience includes Early Childhood Program, first and fourth grade teacher assistant, CCHS Library Assistant, & Tucker Elementary School Library Assistant.

Nellie is a lifelong resident of the Tucker Community. She attended the following schools: Pearl River Elementary, Choctaw Central Middle School, Marion Heights Academy, Choctaw Central High School, Haskell Junior College, Trend Business College, & East Central Community College.

She is very proud of her family, which is evident when she speaks of her nephew, Chief Cyrus Ben, former Choctaw Indian Princess Cheriena Ben, and her nieces’ outstanding educational achievements.

Board members honored the following 2020-2021 Parents of the Year:
- Amber Frazier of Bogue Chitto Elementary School;
- Rick & Joy Alex of Choctaw Central High School;
- Victoria Billie of Choctaw Central Middle School;
- Sharisha Evans of Conehatta Elementary School;
- William & Rosie York of Pearl River Elementary School;
- Ryan Killingsworth of Red Water Elementary School;
- Aaron & Tanisha Imhof of Standing Pine Elementary School;
- Eddie Sam of Tucker Elementary School.

For further information, please contact Heather Adams at 601/663-7640 or Dianne Johnston at 601/656-5724.
Awards Day Held at PRES

Pearl River Elementary School honored students during the 2020-21 Awards Day ceremony on Wednesday, May 19, in the Pearl River Elementary Gymnasium. The following students receiving subject awards & honors are listed below.

EXCEPTIONAL EDUCATION
Citizenship - Israel Cotton & Trayden Dixon.
Most Improved - Gaylon Gibson & Kentray Frazier.

KINDERGARTEN (K1)
Citizenship - Hamaya Morris.
Most Improved - Ky-lus John.
Language Arts, Perfect Attendance - Pدامbe Billie.
Science, Perfect Attendance - Riley Isaac.

KINDERGARTEN (K2)
Most Improved - Hayden Dan.
Math - Maydream York.
Language Arts - Braylon Clemons.
Science - Madelyn Burrage.
Social Studies - Krymsen McMillan.

KINDERGARTEN (K3)
Citizenship - Shelnalinya Frazier.
Most Improved - Ahlaric Hernandez.
Math - Xaiden Leach.
Language Arts - Cecin Anderson.
Science - Tamatoa Baldeagle.
Social Studies - Kyler Willis.

KINDERGARTEN (K4)
Citizenship - Eve Lewis.
Most Improved - Shannelaya Tubby.
Math - Kaiseton Shell.
Language Arts - J’Ha-zlyn Bell.
Science - Kaycson Clemons.

KINDERGARTEN (K5)
Citizenship - Aizlyn Wilson.
Most Improved - Sky-la Willis.
Math - Teyana Clemmons.
Language Arts - Khyrri Cantrell.
Science - Logan Hickman.
Social Studies - CayeLea Frazier.

1ST GRADE (1-1)
Citizenship - La’Nayah Thomas.
Most Improved - Najsali Cuellar.
Math, Honor Roll - Anna’Laiya Tubby.
Language Arts, Honor Roll - Hazelin Joe.
Science, Social Studies - Lane Willis.

Social Studies - Lane Willis.

1ST GRADE (1-2)
Citizenship - Jai- yce ‘Yann Bell.
Most Improved - Rudell Cotton.
Language Arts, Social Studies, Honor Roll - NeyaLah Dixon.
Honor Roll - Rylie Barojas, Madalynn Jimmie & Stormie Willis.
Perfect Attendance - Ethan Gibson.

1ST GRADE (1-3)
Citizenship - Myree Tubby.
Most Improved - Col- lie Willis.
Math, Honor Roll, Perfect Attendance - Ja-celyn Lewis.
Language Arts, Honor Roll - Shanelle Jordan.
Science, Honor Roll, Perfect Attendance - Mahaylie Clemons.
Social Studies, Honor Roll - Neilani Thompson.
Honor Roll - Alleleigh Dixon.

2ND GRADE (2-1)

Pre-Kindergarten-1 Graduates
Pre-Kindergarten-2 Graduates
Kindergarten-1 Award Recipients
Kindergarten-1 Graduates
Kindergarten-2 Award Recipients
Kindergarten-2 Graduates
see PRES, pg. 12
Citizenship - Becca Isaac.
Most Improved - Amaizlee Comby.
Math, Honor Roll - Dawson Tubby.

Language Arts - D’Anthony Willis.
Science, Honor Roll - Payton Meely.
Social Studies, Honor Roll - Jaciryn Vaughn.

Kindergarten-5 Award Recipients

Kindergarten-4 Award Recipients

Kindergarten-3 Award Recipients

Kindergarten-2 Graduates

2ND GRADE (2-2)
Citizenship - Koda Smith.
Most Improved - Miley Frazier.
Math, Honor Roll - Payton Meely.

Language Arts, Honor Roll - Manalli Baldeagle.
Science - Hunter John.
Social Studies, Honor Roll - Jaciryn Vaughn.

Kindergarten-4 Graduates

Kindergarten-3 Graduates

2ND GRADE (2-3)
Citizenship - D’Ana-lyn Bell.
Most Improved - Rocco Sam.
Math, Honor Roll - Traih’sin John.
Language Arts, Honor Roll, Perfect Attendance - Paeton Gibson.
Science - Tehya Jimme.
Social Studies - Kamari Cantrell.

2ND GRADE (2-4)
Citizenship, Honor Roll - Kyzler Nickey.
Most Improved, Honor Roll - Chanceton Shoemake.
Language Arts, Honor Roll, Science Fair - Anzaerius Huddleston.
Science, Honor Roll - Laiya Willis.
Social Studies, Honor Roll - Iylah King.
Honor Roll - Cailey Bryant, Kady Hickman & Alicia Stell.

3RD GRADE (3-1)
Citizenship - Ma’Li-yah Johnson.
Most Improved - Deemarcus Comby.
Math, Honor Roll - Caybriana Hickman.
Language Arts - Tyasia Hughes.
Science - Sanaeya Martin.
Social Studies - Chashion Dixon.

3RD GRADE (3-2)
Citizenship - Treyton Kinsolving.
Most Improved - Bryson Wilson.
### Grade 3-2 Award Recipients
- Science, Social Studies - Aryanna Mitch
- Honor Roll - Kaecetyn Williams
- Citizenship - Laken Dixon
- Most Improved - Kaylene Willis
- Math - Tav'n Wesley
- Language Arts - Maggie Jim
- Science - Lovelle Dixon
- Social Studies - Kamson Thomas

### Grade 4-2 Award Recipients
- Science, Social Studies - Jairden Wishork
- Most Improved - ChrisAenn Stoliby
- Math, Language Arts, Honor Roll - Karyton Hudson
- Social Studies - Jacob Henry

### Grade 4-3 Award Recipients
- Citizenship - Tanae’ Reyes-Cruz
- Most Improved - Kaden Nickey
- Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Honor Roll - Sherman Billie
- Reading - Kairyn Dixon

### Grade 4-4 Award Recipients
- Honor Roll - Cleve Thomas
- Citizenship - Dale Phillips
- Most Improved - Tarlaysha Dixon
- Math, Science, Social Studies - Amee Stell
- Language Arts - Elijah McMillian
- Reading - Braely Isaac

### Grade 5-1 Award Recipients
- Citizenship - Cipriana Rosas
- Most Improved - Ladainian Isom
- Math, Honor Roll - Kayli Barahona
- Language Arts, Science, Honor Roll - Beauwy Bell
- Reading, Social Studies, Honor Roll - Chayton Willis

### Grade 5-2 Award Recipients
- Citizenship - Layton Isaac
- Most Improved - continued pg. 20
“We’ve heard from elders and in today’s world there will be hurdles. There will be things coming up that we may not understand, but there is strength through God as you are strong intellectual and blessed members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians,” said Chief Ben. “Each and everyone of you, we know, will do great things as you have thus far as you sit here tonight as a Warrior and a Lady Warrior.”

Top scholars and members of the Top Ten of the CCHS Class of 2021 offering their addresses were Salutatorian Brannon Jim and Valedictorian Sierra Rayne Wallace.

Brannon, of the Pearl River Community, is the son of Landon Jim and Barbarella Isom and the grandson of Annie Kate Sam and the late Barry Jim, Sr., and Alford Isom and Nelda Shoemake.

Jim’s honors include Rotary Student of the Month and being a member of Leadership Neshoba. He was a member of cross country, soccer, winter guard floor crew, ACT 20+ Club and HOSA-Future Health Professionals.

“I thank my family and friends for believing in me and helping me achieve this very important milestone in life. The two people I personally want to thank are my mom and dad as they always told me to get my education first before I get out into the real world. A good education can take you far in life,” said Jim.

He plans to leave for U.S. Army basic training in June and come back to attend Mississippi State University and study chemistry. While in the Army he plans to specialize in human resources.

“I remember when the Class of 2021 first roamed the hallways of Choctaw Central. We all have matured since most of us, mainly me, were perceived as rambunctious. Most of us found our deepest passions while others may have found someone who inspires them. Overall, we found integrity as a class,” Jim said.

“I still see that same Class of 2021, rambunctious from time to time, but we are confident of ourselves. These traits we possess will aid in our future, whatever that may be. Whether it’s college or the work force, I believe in each and everyone of my fellow graduates. You all hold a key to your own success. Congratulations to the class of 2021. We did it!”

Sierra, also of the Pearl River Community, is the daughter of Landon Jim and Barbarella Isom and the granddaughter of Randy Wallace and the late Rhonda Billy and Hazel Bell Willis and the late Darrell Glenn Willis.

Some of her honors include being a member of the National Society of High School Scholars, 2020 CCHS Homecoming Queen, September 2020 Rotary Club Student of the Month, and senior class president. She was also a member of the ACT 20+ Club, Leadership Neshoba, Yearbook Club, powerlifting, soccer, track and cross country.

“I decided to treat my speech like a cross country run. It will be hard, but we’ll make it through in the fastest time possible,” said Wallace.

“As the four years flew by, we all learned who we are, what we should do and what we will become. We are the prime example of not allowing a minor setback to destroy our opportunity of having a major comeback. It is amazing what we have accomplished as a class and how we continue to support one another as a Class of 2021.”

She plans to attend Blue Mountain College and major in exercise science and become an athletic trainer.

“We were in school from Pre-K to 12th grade. This chapter of our lives will finally come to an end, and I cannot be any more proud to walk across the stage with such a determined group of people.”

With four years of preparation at Choctaw Central, Wallace said each graduate is more than capable of becoming something great.

“It has been a long, hard fought battle, but we did it! In just a few moments, we will move our tassles to signify our academic achievement of becoming Choctaw Central alumni. Thank you, congratulations and Go Warriors!”

Rounding out the Top Ten students of the CCHS Class of 2021 are, in alphabetical order, Leilani Charlie, Laliana Crosby, Kearson Grisham, Kyler Jefferson, Traiton Martin, Isley Mingo, Meloney Thames, and Jaiden Thomas.

Senior class secretary Leilani Charlie offered the benediction after the presentation of graduates and awarding of diplomas by Principal Keams and Chief Ben.
SPES Class of 2021 Graduates

Standing Pine Elementary School hosted a graduation ceremony for their sixth graders on Wednesday, May 19 at the Standing Pine Elementary Gymnasium. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben and Director of Schools Dr. Randall Grierson were in attendance to offer their congratulations to members of the Class of 2021. They include Lacy Alex, Bayliss Billy, Ty Briscoe, Hayden Denson, Hiahni Denson, Jakobi Denson, Nalayah Denson, Brady Farve, Kaden Hall, Meyabay Henry, Yasmine Hickman, Bryant Jim, Hunter Lewis, Melanie Lewis, Malena Mitch, Jakayla Moore, Tiger Sockey, & Kywa Thomas. Congratulations!
RWES Class of 2021
Congratulations to Red Water Elementary School's 8th Grade Class of 2021 as graduation ceremonies was held on Thursday, May 20 at the Red Water Elementary Gymnasium. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben offered special remarks & offered his congratulations to the graduates. Members of the graduating class included Lakristia Boyd, Ashaun Chapman, Natalie Chitto, Ciara Cotton, Kaden Edwards, Kaymeree Gibson, Dayanara Lopez, Sebastian May, Jamari Wesley, Bracyn Willis, & Karidee Willis.

Congratulations Choctaw Virtual Learning Center’s Class of 2021
Royce Lee Ballew, Jr.
Kenetta Marie Barojas
Cassandra Deanne Bell
Malaula Onaha’li Ben
Ronald Durand Billy
Kristen Nicole Clemons
Dwain Byrd Clemmons
Dregen Lee Denson
Dallanicka Rayann Dixon
Monica Danielle Ealy
Decemma Loniya Hickman
Jordon Mitchell Isaac
Tanya De Anne Isaac
Alyssa Renee Jim
Cameron Zander John
Shilombish Thomas John
Louise Lewis
Keaton Drew McCombs
Katrel Cane Thomas
Tara Denise Toosie
Ellen Macario Tomas
Darisa Luree Tubby
Camryn Reese Vivians
Jada Breeshay Wallace
Neka Denielle Wesley
Ian Miles Williamson
Alexandria Reann Willis
Jamal Raheem Willis
Nakeya Shunta Willis
Nora Ann Wilson
Kiyalena Clemons.
Math - Kenndi Dixon.
Language Arts, Reading, Honor Roll - Jayzlee Wesley.
Science - Dayshaun Clayton.
Social Studies - Osi Chapman.
Honor Roll - Eliyah Jimmie.

5THGRADE (5-3)
Citizenship - Brooklyn Willis.
Most Improved, Math - Jae McMillan.
Language Arts, Reading, Social Studies - Lazarus Isaac.
Science, Honor Roll - Ashton Stephens.
Honor Roll - JaCaylie Bell & Channing Bloodsaw.

5THGRADE (5-4)
Citizenship - Kaleiyah Polk.
Most Improved - Zaymien Sam.
Math, Language Arts, Reading, Social Studies, Honor Roll - A’Lalih Dixon.
Science, Honor Roll - Alysia Steve.
Honor Roll - Carmella Tubby.

6THGRADE (6-1)
Citizenship - Dorian Bell.
Most Improved - Kaylei Tubby.
Math, Language Arts, Social Studies - Nalayna Willis.
Reading - Callie Stafford.
Science - Brayceon Jackson.
Perfect Attendance - Nakota Willis.

6THGRADE (6-2)
Citizenship - Taysha Isaac.
Most Improved - Ciarra Wallace.
Math, Science - Asante Johnson.
Language Arts - Kineigh Farmer.
Reading - Gracie Butler.
Social Studies - J’Kadryn Bell.

6THGRADE (6-3)
Citizenship - William Slocum.
Most Improved - Izaih Tubby.

6THGRADE (6-4)
Citizenship - Tas’Shan Shumake.
Most Improved - J’Cob Isaac.
Social Studies, Honor Roll - Ethanial Nickey.
Honor Roll - J’Cob Sam.

Math, Science - Asante Johnson.
Language Arts - Kineigh Farmer.
Reading - Gracie Butler.
Social Studies - J’Kadryn Bell.

Social Studies - Miley McMillan.
Perfect Attendance - Jamearan Wallace.

Social Studies, Honor Roll - Kelli Williams.
Honor Roll - Ethanial Nickey.
Honor Roll - J’Cob Sam.
SPES Hosts 2020-21 Awards Day

Standing Pine Elementary School honored students during the 2020-21 Awards Day ceremony on Wednesday, May 19, in the Standing Pine Elementary Gymnasium. The following students receiving awards & honors are listed below.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN
Citizenship - Darnesha Willis.
Star Early Literacy - Gracie Wilson.
Most Improved Student - Rueshawn Allen.
Overall Pre-K Girl - Violet Farve.
Overall Pre-K Boy - Draeden Sam.

KINDERGARTEN
Citizenship - Hunter Sam.
Attendance Excellence - Teyari Primer.
Most Improved Student - Ignacio Vargas.
iReady Reading - Charly John.
iReady Math - Teyari Primer.
Overall Kindergarten Student - Zendaya Frazier.

1ST GRADE
Attendance Excellence - Cerulean Lewis.
Chief’s List (All A’s) - Cerulean Lewis & Grayson Tangle.
Principal’s List (A’s/ B’s) - Bailee Frazier, Liliana Frazier, Jack John, Braden Sam, Jr., Avia Thompson, Zuriana Willis.
Citizenship - Bailee Frazier.
iReady Reading - Braden Sam.
iReady Math - Braden Sam.

2ND GRADE
Attendance Excellence - Kenaric Cotton & Dason Isaac.
Principal’s List - Kenaric Cotton, Ha’miah Frazier, Avery Hardy, Milayla Shomo, & Elizabeth Willis.
Citizenship - Faith Lewis.
iReady Reading - Raenise Jefferson.
iReady Math - Paige Lewis.
AR Award - Paige Lewis.
Most Improved Student - I’zden Charlie.
Math - Ha’miah Frazier.
Language Arts - Elizabeth Willis.
Science - Milayla Shomo.
Social Studies - Kenaric Cotton.
Highest GPA - Milayla Shomo.

3RD GRADE
Perfect Attendance - Mel’Laney Lindsey.
Chief’s List - Jayden Hardy.
Principal’s List - Shaylee Alex, Jay’ce Chickaway, Makayla Gibson, Daislin Isaac, Mel’Laney Lindsey, & Xavi Vargas.
Citizenship - Ezequiel Lewis.
iReady Reading - Shaylee Alex.
iReady Math - Daislin Isaac.
AR Award - Ja’Keisha Farmer.
Most Improved Student - Mel’Laney Lindsey.
Language Arts - Jayden Hardy.
Math - Jayden Hardy.
Science - Jayden Hardy.
Social Studies - Jayden Hardy.
Highest GPA - Jayden Hardy.

4TH GRADE
Perfect Attendance - Ansen McMillan.
Attendance Excellence - Easlin Nickey & Tekhyius Primer.
Chief’s List - Ansen McMillan.
Citizenship - Khloe Farve.
iReady Reading - Ansen McMillan.
iReady Math - Summer Lewis.
AR Award - Ansen McMillan.
Most Improved Student - Summer Lewis.
Language Arts - Ansen McMillan.
Math - Ansen McMillan.
Science - Ansen McMillan.
Social Studies - Ansen McMillan.
Highest GPA - Ansen McMillan.

5TH GRADE
Perfect Attendance - Dracetin Isaac.

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Students Honored at TES Awards Day

Tucker Elementary School honored students during the 2020-21 Awards Day ceremony on Thursday, May 20 in the Tucker Elementary Gymnasium. The following students receiving subject awards & honors are listed below.

**PRE-KINDERGARTEN**
- Math - Necie Charlie
- Reading - Necie Charlie & Gracelynn McMillan
- Most Improved, Math - Cliff Willis Jr.
- Most Improved, Reading - Treynisa Anderson
- Music - Necie Charlie
- Choctaw Language - Necie Charlie

**KINDERGARTEN**
- Math - Caiden Sampson
- Reading - Keilani Gibson
- Most Improved, Math - Rhyus York
- Most Improved, Reading - Dominic McMillan

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**SPES**

Principal’s List - Dracetin Isaac, Hayli Hall & Jayshaun Hardy.
- Citizenship - Hayli Hall.  
  - iReady Reading - Jayshaun Hardy.
  - iReady Math - Ana=bella Farve.  
  - AR Award - Dracetin Isaac.
  - Most improved Student - Tayden Hickman.
  - Language Arts - Brylas Willis.
  - Math - Hayli Hall.
  - Science - Hayli Hall.
  - Social Studies - Brylas Willis.
- Highest GPA - Hayli Hall.

**6TH GRADE**
- Perfect Attendance - Hayden Denson.
- Citizenship - Melanie Lewis.  
  - iReady Reading - Kaden Hall.  
  - iReady Math - Yazmine Hickman.
  - AR Award - Jakayla Moore.
  - Most Improved Student - Lacy Alex.
  - Language Arts - Hi=ahni Denson.
  - Math - Hayden Denson.
  - Science - Brady Farve.
  - Social Studies - Hi=ahni Denson.
  - Highest GPA - Brady Farve.

**SPECIAL RECOGNITION**
- Secrets of Reading Award - Jaylynn Johnson.
- COMPUTER AWARDS
  - Pre-Kindergarten
  - Rueshawn Allen; Kindergarten - Shari=adon Peters; 1st grade - Grayson Tangle; 2nd grade - Ha’miah Frazier; 3rd grade - Shaylee Alex; 4th grade - Ansen McMillan; 5th grade - Brylas Willis; 6th grade - Bayliss Billy

**MUSIC AWARDS**
- Pre-Kindergarten
  - Gracie Wilson; Kindergarten - Erissa Jefferson; 1st grade - Jayden Johnson; 2nd grade - Ha’mi=ah Frazier; 3rd grade - Xavi Vargas; 4th grade - Dezaray Anderson; 5th grade - Naomi King; 6th grade - Malena Mitch.

**P.E. AWARDS**
- Pre-Kindergarten
  - Vi=olet Farve; Kindergarten
  - Tayari Primer; 1st grade - Jayden Johnson; 2nd grade - Ambrosia Isaac; 3rd grade - Zayden Isaac; 4th grade - Maaliyah Henry; 5th grade - Isabella Denson; 6th grade - Jakobi Denson

**CHOCTAW LANGUAGE AWARDS**
- Pre-Kindergarten
  - Colt Frazier; Kindergarten
  - Zendaya Frazier; 1st grade - Jayden Johnson; 2nd grade - Grayson Tangle; 3rd grade - Elizabeth Willis; 4th grade - Mel’Laney Lindsey; 5th grade - Easlin Nick=ey; 6th grade - Jaylynn Johnson; 6th grade - Jakayla Moore.

**OVERALL AWARDS**
- Overall Citizenship - Daislin Isaac.
- Overall Accelerated Reader - Cerulean Lewis.
- Overall Lower Elementary (1st-3rd) Highest GPA - Cerulean Lewis.

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Continued from page twenty-one...
Willis.
Music - Keilani Gibson & Balian Morris.
Choctaw Language - Keilani Gibson & Rhys York.
Science Fair - Keilani Gibson (Plant Science, 2nd place) & Dominic Willis (Physics & Astronomy, 3rd place).
1ST GRADE
Math - Carter York.
Reading - Nathaniel Amos.
Most Improved, Math - Liam Thomas.
Most Improved, Reading - Dracen McMillan.
Science Fair - Kaleb Farmer (Physics & Astronomy, 3rd place), Faithlyn Mingo (Biochemistry, 1st place), James Polk (Earth & Environmental Science, 1st place), Lai’Lee Wallace (Earth & Environmental Science, 2nd place), Jacaius Willis (Earth & Environmental Science, 2nd place).
Chief’s List (All A’s) - Karson Bell, Arialyn Henry & Carter York.
Principal’s List (All A’s & B’s) - Kaleb Farmer, Ja’sia Henry, Savion King, Keianna Lewis, James Polk, Liam Thomas, & Lai’Lee Wallace.
2ND GRADE
Math - Paycen Comby.
Reading - Taren Black.
Most Improved, Math - Zeta Ben.
Most Improved, Reading - Malvin Lewis.
Science - Braydon Farmer.
Social Studies - A’Ria McMillan.
Citizenship - Kaysyn Thompson.
Music - Amalynn Frazier & Kaegrel Willis.
Choctaw Language - Paycen Comby, Amalynn Frazier, Mylah Gibson, A’ria McMillan, Bella Steve, Braydon Farmer, & Karsin Thomas.
Science Fair - Mylah Gibson (Inorganic Chemistry, 1st place) & A’Ria McMillan (Plant Science, 2nd place).
Chief’s List - A’ria McMillan.
Principal’s List - Taren Black, Paycen Comby, Braydon Farmer, Braydon Farmer, Amalyn Frazier, Mylah Gibson, Malvin Lewis, Karsin Thomas.
3RD GRADE
Math - Elliana Tubby & Cayden Rocha.
Reading - Madelynn Henry & Leim McMillan.
Most Improved, Math - Camila Willis & Kaiden Tucker.
Most Improved, Reading - Iley Eades & Damari Thomas.
Science - Lindraya King & Lazethan Billy.
Social Studies - Kazelynn Farmer & Jordanian Polk.
Citizenship - Greatone Ben & Kaiden Tubby.
Choctaw Language - Iley Eades & Lazethan Billy.
Music - Josephynn Billy & Kaiden Tubby.
Best Handwriting - Taylee Charlie & Kadem Wallace.
Science Fair - Lazethan Billy (Math & Systems Software, 1st place).
4TH GRADE
Math - Cameron Gibson.
Reading - Damarri Sam.
Most Improved, Math - Kollier Thomas.
Most Improved, Reading - Aymeri McMillan.
Science - Cameron Gibson.
Social Studies - Logan Denson & William Willis.
Citizenship - Mackane Isaac.
Choctaw Language - Makaelyn Bell.
Music - Jaelynn Mitch & Centarain Black.
Science Fair - Cameron Gibson (Earth & Environmental Science, 4th place).
Principal’s List - Centarain Black, Logan Denson, Cameron Gibson, Damarri Sam, & Kollier Thomas.
5TH GRADE
Math - Hunter Segenhagen.
Reading - Jake Segenhagen.
Most Improved, Math - see TES, pg. 20
TES ............................................................................................... continued from page twenty-three

CCMS, CCHS Educators Honored

Educators at Choctaw Central Middle School (left) and Choctaw Central High School (right) were honored by Chief Cyrus Ben & the Tribal Administration in celebration of Teachers Appreciation Week. Staff members were presented with cookie trays for their commitment in educating our Tribal students.

First MCA Class at CCHS a Success

The first Mississippi Coding Academies (MCA) class at Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) concluded on May 14, 2021. Shonda Wesley served as teacher aide & MCA Facilitator to coding students Jaylen Bell, Joe Bell, Jr., John Clemens, Keziah Frazier, Jacob Jim, Xative Nickey, Wynter Willis, & Madison Wilson.

Beginning in January 2021, students received their first instructions in coding & applications as they got a chance to think of various career opportunities in their future.

Their primary instruction was in C# (C Sharp) programming language. They also learned to use functions, statements, boolean, & looping.

They learned how to utilize Visual Studio, a developer’s tool that makes app development easier for any platform.

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CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

& language.
Next, they switched to PICO-8, a fantasy console for making, sharing, & playing tiny games & other computer programs. The class created a game that involved making a ball hit a paddle & go back & forth within the game without leaving the screen. They called this new game Breakout.

“This program has kept me busy, but the students made this experience worth it. I think I would facilitate again if needed. This program has made the students & me to build long lasting relationships,” stated Wesley.

Special thanks to the Mississippi Coding Academies, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Choctaw Tribal Schools, Office of Economic Development, Ben Hubbard, Dr. Sarah Lee, John Hendrix, Dr. Randy Grierson, Shonda Wesley, Andrew Stamps, & most of all, the students that participated in the first-ever MCA cohort in Choctaw. Thank you for making the class a success & hopefully we will be seeing MCA again soon!

CCHS Hosts Academic, Athletic Awards Day

Choctaw Central High School honored students & student-athletes during the 2020-21 Academic/Athletic Awards Day ceremony on Friday, May 14, 2021, at Warrior Stadium in Choctaw. Students honored during the academic ceremony are listed below.

Art I - Sierra Ben.
Art I (extra merit) - Tanyon Willis
Art II - Deshaylee Tubby.
Band - Iysiahs (Man-
y) York.
  Winter Guard - Isley Mingo.
  Winter Guard - Kaid-
en Anderson.
  Driver’s Education - Kashton Grisham.
  Choctaw Language/ Culture I - Buford Billie.
  Choctaw Language/ Culture I - Iysiahs (Man-
y) York.
  Choctaw Language/ Culture II - Fichik Willis & Breanna Isaac.
  Choctaw Language/ Culture II - Deshaylee Tubby, Braxton Roach & Kaisen Edwards.
Spanish I - Catherine Jim.
Spanish II - Halley Sam.
STEM - Demidrea Stokes.
Personal Finance - Si-
erra Wallace.
Personal/Social Fi-
nance - Eliza Willis.
Personal/Social Fi-
nance - Diaz York.
Citizenship - Quentin
Comby (11th).
Learning Strategies - Eric Martin.
Compensatory Math -
Dayon Hickman.
Inclusion Math -
Cadee McMillan.
Math - Juan Perez
(9th).
Algebra I - Jabari
Denson.
Geometry - Landon
Bounds.
MSMS Geometry - Iy-
siahs (Manny) York.
Algebra II - Kylei
Williamson.
MSMS Algebra II -
Phoenix Wilson.
Algebra III - Lathom
Williams, Jr.
MSMS Algebra III -

Makayla Hickman.
Calculus - Sierra Wall-
lace.
MSMS Calculus -
Traiton Martin.
Essentials/SREB
Math - Rianna Ben.
Foundations to Alge-
bra - Joelson Thomas.
Biology I - Delycia
Cunningham.
Honors Biology -
Phoenix Wilson.
Foundations to Bio-
logy - Buford Billie (98.6).
Physical Science - Ja-
cob Jim.
Chemistry - Makayla
Hickman.
Physics - Traiton Mar-

CCHS students being honored during the academic awards ceremony at Warriors Stadium.

Honor Students Recognized  Tribal students of the Choctaw Tribal Schools System named to Honor Rolls at their respective schools received a special HONOR STUDENT yard sign signifying their exceptional work during the 2020-2021 school year. The signs were compliments of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw In-
dians, Choctaw Tribal Schools & The Citizens Bank. Presenting the signs to students at Pearl River Elementary School (pictured left) & Choctaw Central Middle School (pictured right) included Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Director of Schools Dr. Randall Grierson, & representatives Mark Taylor & Jackie Hester from The Citizens Bank.

see CCHS, pg. 26
(11th).
Comp. English I - Aiden Jim.
Inclusion English IV - Jacob Jim.
Compensatory English - Aison Jim.
English I - Tory Henry (96.6).
English I - Nataysia Willis (96.3).
English I - J’Haven Smith (95.3).
Acc. English I - Iy-siahs (Manny) York.
English II - Janina Williams.
Acc. English II - Phoenix Wilson.
English III - Lathom Williams, Jr.
Compensatory English III - Anakin York.
Acc. English III - Makayla Hickman.
English IV - Leilani Charlie.
AP Literature - Kearon Grisham.
Creative Writing - Tessa Standing Elk.
Mississippi Studies - Iy-siahs (Manny) York.
Introduction to World Geography - Buford Billie.
World History - Destiny Montoya-Hickman.
U.S. History - Kyla Farmer.
Choctaw History - Jacob Jim.
Economics - Sierra Wallace.
Government - Halley Sam.
Ag & Natural Science I - Sierra Ben.
Ag & Natural Science II - Halley Sam.
Construction Technology - Scottie Tyler Bell.
Culinary Arts I - Kylie Williamson.
Culinary Arts II - Cheyan Robinson.
Engineering - Ivan Thomas.
Engineering II - Mel- layney Billy.
Health Science I - Clar-issa Benally.
Health Science II - Katelyn John.
Information Technology - Manuel Perez.
Information Networking Technology II - Joe Bell.
Welding - Jordon Truss.
Work Based Learning - Taylor McMillan.
Work Study - Tanyon Willis.
Reading (Level 12) - Landon Bounds (12.7), Zarius Johnson (12.6), Phoenix Wilson (12.5), Jacob Frazier (12.4), Jaeon Johnson (12.1), Kaisen Edwards (12.0), Quinten Dixon (12.0), Alexander Willis (12.0).
Reading (Level 11) - Braden Townsend (11.5), Janina Williams (11.3) & Steven Gibson (11.2).
Reading (Most Improved) - Terra Hickman, Malakia Foster, Tina John, Destiny Montoya-Hickman, Tiak Willis, Elliana Ben, Catherine Jim, Jameann Sockey, Hailee Stephens, Deangelo Lavato, Braylen Bell, Tyra Billy, Arral Frazier, Bonifacio Hernandez, & Jeriah Jimmie.
Reading (Most Determined) - Braxton Roach, Amzie Anderson, Addison Johnson, Cadee McMillan, Kobe Willis, Precious Chapman, Nickolas Farmer, Talieck Ben, Johnny Vaughn, Tushka Bell, & Thomas Ben.
ACT 20+ Club members honored included (seniors) Caden Bell, Katelyn John, Traiton Martin, Isley Mingo, Xative Niccy, Cheyan Robinson, Trevell Vivi- ans, Sierra Wallace, Diaz Willis; (juniors) Clarissa Benally, Kyla Farmer, Makayla Hickman, Ivan Thomas, Kylie William- son, & Memorie Willis.
ACT 25+ Club members honored included senior Brannon Jim & sophomore Phoenix Wilson. All members were recipients of an ECCC scholarship & a
Warrior hoodie.
Leilani Charlie was a recipient of a $500 Community of Action scholarship.
Isley Mingo was named the winner of a $500 Rotary Club Essay contest & a recipient of a band scholarship at the University of West Alabama.
Cheyan Robinson was named a recipient of a band scholarship at the University of West Alabama.

Student-Athletes honored during the athletic ceremony are listed below.

**FOOTBALL**
Elfi Joe - All-District Quarterback; Trevell Vivians - Super 22 Team All-District Defense Line; Gage Wesley - 1st Team All-District Linebacker; Billie Isom - 1st Team All-District Linebacker; Elias Bell - 1st Team All-District Receiver & Scholar Athlete; Kyler Jefferson - 1st Team All-District Offensive Line; & Notah Tubby - 1st Team All-District Defensive Line.

**POWERLIFTING**
(Girls) Catherine Jim - Warrior Award; North State - Sierra Wallace, Leilani Charlie, Catherine Jim, & Jaiden Thomas; (Boys) Kyler Jefferson - Warrior Award; North State - Kyler Jefferson & Gage Wesley.

**GIRLS SOCCER**
Jaiden Thomas - Offensive Player of the Year; Leia Phillips - Defensive Player of the Year; Yazzlyn Alex - Soccer MVP; Catherine Jim - Most Improved;

Sierra Wallace - Leadership Award.

**BOYS SOCCER**
Aven Joe - Offensive Player of the Year; Kealyn Lovelace - Defensive Player of the Year; Andreas Jim - MVP; Tristen Henry - Most Improved; Alarys Johnson - Leadership Award.

**GIRLS BASKETBALL**
Free Throw Award - Carly Keats; Scholar Athlete - Carly Keats; Best Defense - Lyeonia Johnson; Best Offensive Player - Meloney Thomas; Lady Warrior Award - Laliana Crosby; Hardest Worker - Kyla Farmer; All-District Team - Shantashia John, Sarah Williams, Carly Keats, Lyeonia Johnson; All-District MVP - Meloney Thomas; 4A State Tournament - Carly Keats, Lyeonia Johnson & Meloney Thomas.

**BOYS BASKETBALL**
MOP - Thomas Tangle; Best Offensive Player - Speedy Lewis; Best Defensive Player - Elias Bell; Most Improved - Hayden Jones; 6th Man Award - Abram Cotton; Warrior Award - Billie Isom; Scholar Athlete - Traiton Martin; Leadership - Brayson Samuel; All-District - Traiton Martin, Speedy Lewis, Brayson Samuel, & Thomas Tangle.

**GIRLS GOLF**
Top Golfer - Carly Keats; Tree Hugger Award - Kylie Williamson; Lady Warrior Award - Kyla Farmer.

**BOYS GOLF**
Best Golfer - Peyton Mingo; Most Improved - Brayson Samuel.

**FAST-PITCH SOFTBALL**
Golden Glove Award - Best Infielder - Kodi Jimmie; Golden Glove Award Best Outfielder - Malaka Morris; Slugger Award - Malaka Morris; Most Improved - Ahnaya Williams; Scholar Athlete Award - Delayia Cunningham; Best All-Around Technical Skill Award - Ashlyn Stephens; Leadership Award - Ciji Vaughn; Best Team Player - Tyra Billy; Stealthiest Base Stealer Award - Kylin Bell; Heartiest Warrior Award (MVP) - Neera Bell.

**TRACK**
All-Around Award - Sierra Wallace & Cody Sockey; Most Improved Award - Zyler Thomas & Aizen Bell; Lady Warrior Award - Hunter Farve; Warrior Award - Kyler Jefferson; Best Sprints Award - Elias Bell; Best Hurdler Award - Jeriah Jimmie; Best Mid-Distance Award - Cody Sockey & Lylo Johnson; Distance Award - Deontray Tubby & Sierra Wallace; Best Long Jump Award - Elias Bell; Best Throwers - Trevell Vivians & Sarah Williams; Student/Athlete Award - Sierra Wallace & Brennon Henry.
Mingo, Robinson Sign with UWA
Isley Mingo (second from left) & Cheyan Robinson (second from right), senior members of Choctaw Central High School's Band program, signed band scholarships to the University of West Alabama in Livingston, AL. In attendance for the signing ceremony included family members, CCHS administrators, & band officials from CCHS & UWA.

Williams Signs with Cowley College
Onnahilli Williams, senior member of the Neshoba Central High Schools Lady Rockets basketball team, signed a letter of intent to play for the Cowley College Lady Tigers basketball program next fall in Arkansas City, KS. Williams, seated right, is surrounded by NCHS administrators & basketball coach.

Thames Signs with JSU
Meloney Thames, senior member of Choctaw Central High School’s Lady Warriors basketball team, signed a letter of intent to play for the Jackson State University Lady Tigers basketball program next fall in Jackson, MS. Thames, seated center, is surrounded by her family & CCHS basketball coaches.

Johnson Signs with SMCC
Lyleonia Johnson, senior member of Choctaw Central High School’s Lady Warriors basketball team, signed a letter of intent to play for the Southwest Mississippi Community College Lady Bears basketball program next fall in Summit, MS. Johnson, seated center, is surrounded by her family, CCHS basketball coaches, administrators, & Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben.

Williams Signs with MCC
Sarah Williams, senior member of Choctaw Central High School’s Lady Warriors basketball team, signed a letter of intent to play for the Meridian Community College Eagles basketball program next fall in Meridian, MS. Williams, seated center, is surrounded by her family & CCHS basketball coaches.

John Signs with MCC
Shantashia John, senior member of Choctaw Central High School’s Lady Warriors basketball team, signed a letter of intent to play for the Meridian Community College Eagles basketball program next fall in Meridian, MS. John, seated center, is surrounded by her family & CCHS basketball coaches.
Wilson Signs with Brewton–Parker College
Tyra Wilson, senior member of the Northeast Jones High School Lady Tigers basketball team, signed a letter of intent to play for the Brewton–Parker College Barons basketball program next fall in Mount Vernon, GA. Wilson, seated center, is surrounded by her family & friends.

Harrison Signs with ECCC
Ramie Harrison, senior member of the Neshoba Central High School Rockets baseball team, signed a letter of intent to play next school year for East Central Community College’s Warriors baseball program in Decatur, MS. Harrison, seated center, is surrounded by his family & NCHS baseball coaches & administrators.

Grisham Signs with Northern Vermont U.
Kearson Grisham, senior member of the Choctaw Central High School Warriors baseball team, signed a letter of intent to play for the Northern Vermont University (Lyndon Campus) Hornets baseball program next school year in Lyndonville, VT. Grisham, seated center, is surrounded by his family & CCHS baseball coaches.

Ben, Tangle Sign with 4-Year College Basketball Programs
Taylor Ben & Sydni Tangle, both sophomore members of Southwest Mississippi Community College’s Lady Bears basketball team, signed to continue their college basketball careers at four-year colleges. Ben signed with Mississippi College in Clinton & Tangle signed with Loyola University New Orleans in Louisiana. Ben, a 2019 graduate of Neshoba Central High School, averaged eight points per game for the Lady Bears this past season. Tangle, a 2019 graduate of Leake Academy, averaged 10.9 points & 6.4 rebounds per game.
Graveside service for Julia Martin, 49, was held on Friday, May 7, 2021, at Bogue Homa Community Cemetery. Rev. Doug Blackledge officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Martin passed away on April 23 at San Juan Medical Hospital in Farmington, NM.

She enjoyed beadwork, sewing Choctaw & Navajo shirts, & being with her family.

She is preceded in death by her brother, Marshall Martin.

Survivors include her daughters, Xaviera Mingo, Nicole Mingo, Nakayla Mingo, & Esmaralda Mingo; sons, Nicholas Mingo & Marshall Mingo; parents, Harold & Tilly Martin; sisters, Lilly Martin & Genevieve Martin; brother, Virgil Martin; & a host of relatives & friends.

Graveside service for Monica Denise Steve Hickman, 45, was held on Sunday, May 9, 2021, at Bogue Chitto Community Cemetery. Pastor Thomas Ben officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Hickman passed away on April 29 at her residence.

Born in Dallas, TX, she resided in Oklahoma & later moved to Kansas. She became a teacher’s assistant at Lawrence Memorial Middle School then moved to Mississippi with her family. She enjoyed reading, cooking, playing pool on her phone, listening to music, being with her husband & pet cat Shadow.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Gerald & Martel Steve; grandparents, John & Maxine Steve; 3 aunts & 3 uncles.

Survivors include her husband, Edwin Hickman, Jr.; daughters, Kayden Bond & Ashlyn Bond; sons, Seth Steve & Joshua Steve; an adopted brother, James “Cookie” Thompson; an uncle & a host of relatives & friends.

JAMES MICHAEL SOLOMON

Funeral service for James Michael Solomon, 55, was held on Saturday, May 15, 2021, at Northridge Woodhaven Funeral Home in Milling, TN.

Mr. Solomon passed away on April 30 at Cape Canaveral, FL, from natural causes.

He received a scholarship to play in The Mighty Sound of the South Marching Band at the University of Memphis. He enjoyed singing, playing hymns & attending Memphis Tigers basketball & football games with his nephews. He was an engineer within the NASA Space Program. His calling to God led him to attend seminary & graduate from Baylor University George W. Truett Theological Seminary. He became an ordained minister & led First Indian Baptist Church in Houston, TX. His engineering career relocated him to Florida where he loved the weather & playing golf.

He is preceded in death by his father, Hillman Solomon, Sr.; sister, Heather Solomon; & brother, Hillman Solomon, Jr.

Survivors include his mother, Laura Solomon; sisters, Myra Frazier, Darnell Gibson (Charlie Gibson), Patricia Craig, & Brenda Solomon; brother, Joshua Solomon; six nephews, two nieces, three aunts, & one uncle.

SEQUITA YVETTE DIXON

Graveside service for Sequita Yvette Dixon, 47, was held on Monday, May 10, 2021, at Isleem Cemetery in Bogue Chitto. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Pastor Shelly Peoples officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Dixon, 47, passed away on May 4 at Mississippi Baptist Medical Center in Jackson.

She was employed with the Pearl River Elementary School as a FACE Program coordinator then a first grade teacher assistant. She enjoyed being with family & friends, traveling, attending concerts, cooking, watching the Lifetime Channel, & cheering for the Dallas Cowboys.

She was preceded in death by her father, Sammy Lee Williams; grandparents, Philmon & Aline Steve Williams, Willie Hickman & Mable Jackson.

Survivors include her husband, Fred Dixon, Sr.; sons, Nathan Smith, Coby Smith, Scott Smith, & Hunter Smith; step-sons, Fred Dixon, Jr., Redman Dixon & Nicholas Dixon; mother, Donna Williams; sisters, Sesaun Williams & Shannon Mingo; brother, Amilcar Tilson Williams; step-mother, Martha Dan; step-sisters, Marlana Dan & Tracey Trolle; step-brothers, Kent Dan & Ramey Dan; 3 grandchildren, 4 step-grandchildren, & a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

DEVIN BENJAMIN McMILLAN

Graveside service for Devin Benjamin McMillan, 33, was held on Friday, May 14, 2021, at Holy Rosary Catholic Cemetery. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.
Mr. McMillan passed away on May 9.

He loved playing stickball with his grandfather & passed on his love of the sport to his sons. He enjoyed being with family & friends, playing basketball & drawing.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Sarah & Hayward McMillan, Sr.; two aunts & an uncle.

Survivors include his mother, Adrienne Tubby; stepfather, Patrick Tubby; sons, Brodie McMillan, Tali Hatak McMillan & Nita Chitto McMillan; sister, Reese Tubby; brother, Sean Tubby; a niece, an uncle & a host of relatives & friends.

DANNY THOMAS

Graveside service for Danny Thomas, 31, was held on Thursday, May 13, 2021, at Greenhill Methodist Cemetery in Pearl River. Deacon Williamson Isaac & Rev. Daniel Tubby officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Thomas passed away on May 10 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

He enjoyed being with family, fishing, drawing, hunting, playing basketball, & driving his Mustang.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Arthur Thomas, Sr. & Christine Willis Thomas; & brothers, Joey Thomas & Joshua Thomas.

Survivors include sisters, Norma Willis, Dina Thomas, Vena John, Vanessa Thomas, & Jeri Thomas; brothers, George Thomas, Bobby Thomas, Sr., Fritz Thomas, Clifton Thomas, Sr., & Arthur Thomas, Jr.; 2 aunts, an uncle, a great-uncle, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

LENA JANE WESLEY WILLIS

Graveside service for Lena Jane Wesley Willis, 57, was held on Sunday, May 16, 2021, at Pearl River Bible Church Cemetery. Bro. Leonard Jimmie officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Willis passed away on May 11 at her residence.

She earned a Masters Degree in Education at Belhaven University & also attended Tulane College & Mississippi State University. She was employed at Pearl River Elementary School as a FACE Program teacher before become a Choctaw Language Instructor. She attended Pearl River Bible Church & enjoyed cooking outdoors, quilting, chanting, dancing, singing, & spending time with her grandkids.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Harvey Joe & Lillie Joe Wesley; & husband, L.C. Willis.

Survivors include her sons, Alan Christopher Martin, Joseph Martin & Wesley Martin; a sister, Carolyn Willis; a brother, Eddie Joe; five grandchildren & a host of aunts, uncles, nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

PEGGY SUE WILLIS TORRES

Graveside service for Peggy Sue Willis Torres, 64, was held on Tuesday, May 18, 2021, at Bogue Chitto Community Cemetery. Rev. Charles Doby & Bro. Ron Scott officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Torres passed away on May 13 at Jackson General Hospital in Jackson, TN.

She was employed with Anderson Hickey Manufacturing & enjoying attending church, reading her Bible, family activities, playing volleyball, horse-shoes, & softball when she was younger.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Collin Willis & Ora Morris; sister, Eva Willis; brothers, John Willis, Wasman Willis, Ernest Willis, & Benjamin Willis; & two grandchildren.

Survivors include her daughter, Pamela Gipson; sons, Randy Torres & Wasman Torres; sisters, Eleanor Fowler, Sue Zapata & Mary Willis Mingo; brothers, Tubby Willis & Arthur Willis; 3 grandchildren & a host of relatives & friends.

BOB LEE SMITH

Graveside service for Bob Lee Smith, 78, was held on Friday, May 28, 2021, at Conehatta Community Cemetery. Deacon Billy Smith & Pastor Mark Patrick officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Smith passed away on May 21 at his residence in Dallas, TX.

He was a U.S. Army Veteran & was previously employed with the Mississippi State Highway Department & Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas as a custodian. He enjoyed reading, listening to music, & being a fan of the Texas Rangers & Dallas Cowboys.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Clement & Mallie Solomon Smith; sons, Herman Neal Smith & John Paul Smith; sister, Nann Smith; brothers, Dalmus Smith, Dalton Smith, Hamilton Smith, & Roger Smith; son-in-law, Frank Dixon, Jr.; a grandson & great-grandson.

Survivors include his daughters, Sharlene Smith Vasquez & Cynthia Smith Dixon; sisters, Mattie Mae Smith & Annie Kate Sam; son-in-law, William Vasquez; 10 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

DORA MINGO STEVE

Graveside service for Dora Mingo Steve, 54, was held on Tuesday, May 25, 2021, at Nanih Waiya Mennonite Cemetery. Rev. Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Steve passed away on May 22 at University Medical Center in Jackson.

She was employed with Tribal Security for numerous years & enjoyed playing with her grandchildren.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Davis & Ossie Joe Mingo; sisters, Geraldine Isaac, Joanne Chickaway, Judy Chickaway, Gladys Frazier, & Tammy Mingo; brothers, Wayne Mingo & Harry Mingo; & a grandchild.

Survivors include her husband, Frank Steve, Jr.; daughter, Sunni Mingo; son, Isaiah Mingo, Sr.; a niece she helped raise, Demondo Mingo; & Tammy Mingo; brothers, Wayne Mingo & Harry Mingo; & a grandchild.
Congratulations to the following Tribal member student-athletes on Neshoba Central’s eighth consecutive Class 5A State Softball Championship Team. They include Nautica Bacon, Shante Beaulieu, Annalise Bell, Jeyda Ben, Hama’ya Fielder, Tenly Grisham, Lanayah Henry, Sa’Nya Jackson, Mauhree Jones, Erica Lyons, Daylynn Mingo, Charmayne Morris, Layana Morris, Keirstyn Thomas, Chloi Thompson, Elleigh Willis, and Mya Willis. The Lady Rockets swept East Central to finish the season undefeated at 32-0.

Congratulations to the following Tribal member student-athletes on Lake’s Class 2A State Softball Championship Team. They are Lyric Lay and Alyssa Sockey. The Lady Hornets swept Mantachie to finish the season 23-7.

MAY 2021

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IRON WARRIOR

JULY 15-17

PRE-REGISTRATION GOING ON NOW

$25 PRE-REGISTRATION FEE • REGISTRATION FORMS AVAILABLE AT WWW.CHOCTAWINDIANFAIR.COM

REGISTER BEFORE JUNE 25 TO GUARANTEE YOUR IRON WARRIOR T-SHIRT AND GET 1 FREE RETRY.

**AFTER JUNE 25TH, REGISTRATION FEE $30.00

COMPETITION SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, JULY 15
1:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.

FRIDAY, JULY 16
1:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M.

SATURDAY, JULY 17
1:00 P.M. - 5:00 P.M.

EVENTS

FARMER’S CARRY
TIRE DEADLIFTS
ATLAS STONES
TIRE FLIP
KEG CARRY

SANDBAG MEBLEY
YOKE CARRY
TRUCK PULL
SLED PUSH

EVENTS CASH PRIZES

1ST PLACE $500
2ND PLACE $200
3RD PLACE $100
4TH PLACE $75
5TH PLACE $50

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
SAM FAYE AT THE CHOCTAW FIRE DEPARTMENT BY PHONE AT 601.658.0820 OR EMAIL AT FAYES@CHOCTAW.ORG

WORLD SERIES SOUTH

EXHIBITION GAMES

WEDNESDAY, JULY 7, 2021 • START TIME - 7:00 P.M.

NORTH TEAM will be comprised of players from the CRYSTAL RIDGE, BOGIE CITTO, PEARL RIVER, and RED WATER COMMUNITIES.

SOUTH TEAM will be comprised of players from the CHICKASAW, STANDING PINE, BOGIE AMOA, and TUCKER COMMUNITIES.

WOMEN’S 35+
EXHIBITION GAME
followed by
MEN’S 50+
EXHIBITION GAME
THE FAIR IS BACK!

One year after being canceled for the first time in its history due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Choctaw Indian Fair is back for its 71st edition on July 14-17 in Choctaw, MS.

Renowned as being the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ largest cultural celebration, the Fair showcases a rich heritage that draws Tribal members & visitors to witness the crowning of a new Choctaw Indian Princess during the annual pageant, participating in traditional social dancing, having a hearty appetite of hominy & frybread or Indian tacos, & cheering on your favorite team in the World Series Stickball championships.

For Choctaw stickball enthusiasts, over 40 games will be played in five divisions: Men’s, Women’s, Men’s 35-Over, & two youth divisions - Pushmataha (ages 10-13) & Tulli Okchi Ishko (ages 14-17). The first toss up is scheduled for Wednesday, July 7 with exhibition games featuring women’s 35-over, followed by the men’s 50-over. An opening ceremony honoring Fallen Tushka will precede the contests.

The World Series Stickball will culminate with division championships on Friday, July 16 for the youth divisions, men’s 35-over & women’s. On Saturday, July 17, the men’s championship will conclude the final night of Fair activities.

The official start of the Fair, Wednesday, July 14, will feature Opening Ceremonies hosted by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben at 6 p.m. at the Amphitheater Main Stage, followed by the Choctaw Indian Princess Pageant at 7 p.m.

Thirteen beautiful young Chahta Ohoyos (Choctaw women) will compete for the honor of being crowned the

Stickball Players Participate in Unity Walk  The Special Diabetes Program’s 14th Unity Walk/Run to promote diabetes awareness & education was held on Saturday, June 26 in Choctaw as players representing Choctaw stickball teams participating in this year’s World Series Stickball (WSS) during the 71st Choctaw Indian Fair ran from their respective practice fields in the Tribal communities to the parking lot of the Choctaw Central High School baseball/softball fields. Once gathered, the players - along with tribal leaders, drummers & the Choctaw Veterans Color Guard - walked united to the Pearl River Amphitheater as officials offered remarks.

see FAIR, pg. 5
Halito!

One can feel the excitement across our Tribal lands. With the sounds of the drum beating, the anticipation of Fair Time runs through each one of us. Stickball games are already underway and championship games a few days away. Princess contestants are concluding their practices at the Main Stage. Dance groups are putting in their last hours of practice to get ready for their time to exhibit our dances at the Dance Ground.

With all that being said, I would like to take a moment and thank the 2021 Choctaw Indian Fair Committee for their efforts in preparing for this year’s Fair. The results of your hard work will pay off shortly, as we celebrate our Tribe’s biggest cultural celebration of the year. The Fair is back, and there is something for everyone in the family to enjoy!

At bracket night, held June 7, I announced that henceforward, the World Series Stickball championship teams will receive an authentic Choctaw drum. It is my belief that the winning teams will be proud and honored to hold up an important aspect of our Choctaw culture as their trophy. World Series Stickball games officially began on Thursday, July 8th and conclude with the men’s championship game on the last night of the Fair, Saturday, July 17th.

On Wednesday, July 14, we will officially kick off activities at the Main Stage with opening ceremonies at 6:00 p.m. A hugely popular event, the Choctaw Indian Princess Pageant, will begin at 7:00 p.m. Don’t miss the chance to see our beautiful, young ladies compete for the chance to serve as our Tribe’s goodwill ambassador for one year. This year, we have 13 contestants, and I wish them all good luck.

I would like to take a moment and offer a big Thank You to our current Princess, Miss Elisah Monique Jimmie. She has been a wonderful representative for our Tribe. She always has a smile on her face and is always warm and friendly to every person she meets. We are all thankful that Elisah was willing to serve her Tribe for a second term due to the pandemic. You have made us all proud, and we wish you the best as you continue on your life’s journey.

During the fair, please visit either the Dance Ground or Main Stage and see Choctaw storytelling in motion. If you watch carefully, you might even notice some slight differences amongst the dancing and chanting of different dance groups and chanters. We are proud to carry on our dance traditions and to share them with you during the Fair.

In addition to the arts and crafts, dancing, music and World Series Stickball, there are also the nightly entertainment, other exhibitions and competitions going on during the day. Follow the Choctaw Indian Fair’s Facebook page for the latest updates on anything Fair-related. We also will have a souvenir Fair program for sale for the low price of $1.00. This printed piece includes information on times and schedules of all activities taking place on the Fairgrounds, as well as other information pertaining to the Fair.

We do encourage people to be safe and continue to follow COVID safety guidelines while on the Fairgrounds. Please wear a mask if you are not vaccinated, keep six feet apart from people who are not in your immediate group, wash or sanitize your hands often and stay home if you are sick. Let us all work together to Protect the Fair!

Safe Travels, and Enjoy the 71st Choctaw Indian Fair!

Chi Yakokilih,

Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief
A LOOK BACK, CHOCTAW INDIAN FAIR

This year marks the 71st Choctaw Indian Fair. It is the Tribe’s largest cultural celebration. The theme of the Fair is The Choctaw Spirit Lives On. Even though the Fair has grown larger over the years and new attractions are added from time to time, the rich cultural heritage of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is still the most important reason why the Fair takes place.

The Choctaw Indian Fair came from humble beginnings. Four years after the Tribe was federally recognized, the first Choctaw Indian Fair was held in 1949 and was a small event where community members gathered together in celebration of what was once referred to as “The New Corn Ceremony” or “Green Corn Festival.” This was a time when the Choctaw people gathered together at the ripening of the first corn and gave thanks for the bounty of the earth. This celebration took place in the fall months.

The Choctaw Indian Fair was originally a three-day event held on what is now the Choctaw Central campus, in the area between the dormitory and the gymnasium. Activities included a carnival, cultural activities, stickball, dancing and plays. Stickball and dancing were held on a field (what is now Warrior Stadium). There would be public speaking at the end of the day, where people would gather to listen to stories and preaching. The community clubs operated concessions, and the clubs and individual families had booths. In 1955 the princess pageant became part of the fair. For the pageant, a stage was brought onto the field. There were two categories for the princess contestants: “street wear” and traditional Choctaw wear; there were no formal evening gowns. Members of the Tribal Council sponsored contestants.

The size and location of the Fair has changed. It is now a four-day event, with some activities, such as stickball games and carnival attractions, beginning a few days prior to the official start of the Fair. The number of fairgoers has greatly increased over the years, bringing visitors from in and out of state, other tribes, and even other countries. The fairgrounds are now located across the street from the high school campus, although stickball games are played on the campus at Warrior Stadium. The number of activities has also grown.

During the first years of the Fair, stickball was an important event, but only a handful of teams played in exhibition games. Over the years the number of stickball participants has grown to include over 50 teams in 5 divisions (men’s, women’s, men’s 35 and over and two youth divisions) in the World Series Stickball tournament.

The princess pageant is one of the most prominent features of the Fair. Tribal and non-Tribal fairgoers are always eager to see who will be crowned as the next Choctaw Indian Princess. The pageant is held at the main stage. As few as ten to as many as twenty young ladies might participate in a pageant.

see LOOK BACK, pg. 4
Sponsors include community development clubs, Tribal programs, stickball teams and even families. There are now four phases of the competition: personal interview, personal presentation, traditional dress review and on-stage question.

Nightly entertainment featuring top-name artists has become a popular pastime in the last few decades and is also held at the main stage. The Iron Warrior and REZ RUN competitions have been added. The carnival at the midway is still a big part of the fair. Other attractions, such as Shawi’s Discovery Zone and the Scales, Tails and Teeth show, offer youth an opportunity to be entertained and enlightened at the same time.

But still, no matter what activities take place at the ever-growing Fair, Choctaw culture will always be at the heart of what the Fair is all about.

Looking at the beautiful arts, crafts and clothing on display, seeing storytelling in motion in the dances, hearing the Choctaw language being spoken throughout the fairgrounds, tasting the delicious traditional foods and watching the thrilling action of World Series Stickball – this is what visitors can experience to have a greater understanding and appreciation of the generations-old cultural legacy of the proud Choctaw people of Mississippi.

The Choctaw Spirit Lives On, year after year, at the Choctaw Indian Fair.
Thirteen vie for Title of Choctaw Indian Princess

The 71st Choctaw Indian Fair is set to open with the Choctaw Indian Princess Pageant on Wednesday, July 14 at 7 p.m. at the Main Stage. Thirteen beautiful young Chahta Ohoyos (Choctaw women) compete for the honor of becoming the 66th Choctaw Indian Princess.

The pageant is scheduled to begin after the opening ceremonies hosted by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben at 6 p.m.

The thirteen lovely contestants are: Lauren Raen Ben is the 21-year-old daughter of Robert & Olivia Ben. She is from the Pearl River Community. This fall, Lauren will continue her post-secondary education at Mississippi College. She is sponsored by the Pearl River Resort Gaming Properties.

Audrianna Pakali-Lakna Billy is the 16-year-old daughter of Eric & Victoria Billy. She is from the Conehatta Community. Audrianna is a student at Choctaw Central High School. She is sponsored by the Conehatta Development Club.

Beverly Dawn Billy is the 16-year-old daughter of Melinda Wallace. She is from the Bogue Homa Community. This fall, Beverly will be a student at Laurel High School. She is sponsored by the Bogue Homa Development Club.

Shemah Ladania Crosby is the 19-year-old daughter of Lane Denson & Oga Crosby. She is from the Standing Pine Community. This fall, Shemah will be a sophomore at Mississippi State University. She is sponsored by the Pearl River RV Park.

Iris Ann Farve is the 18-year-old daughter of Benjamin & Erica Farve. She is from the Standing Pine Community. A recent graduate of Clinton Christian Academy, Iris plans to attend Jones College this fall. She is sponsored by the Homa Development Club.

Audrianna Pakali-Lakna Billy is the daughter of Eric & Victoria Billy. She is from the Conehatta Community. Audrianna is a student at Choctaw Central High School. She is sponsored by the Conehatta Development Club.

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Iris Ann Farve is the 18-year-old daughter of Benjamin & Erica Farve. She is from the Standing Pine Community. A recent graduate of Clinton Christian Academy, Iris plans to attend Jones College this fall. She is sponsored by the Homa Development Club.

The seventh edition of Rez Run will be held Saturday, July 17, beginning at 7 a.m. Participants who haven’t pre-registered can register on-site beginning at 6 a.m. at the Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) track. Races will include a 10K, 5K & one-mile fun run course through parts of the fairgrounds & Pearl River Community. Overall winners will compete for cash prizes also.

A new addition to this year’s competition is the CIF Cornhole Tournament inside the CCHS Gymnasium. A Tribal member tournament will be held on Friday, July 16 from 10 a.m.-until. An open tournament will be held on Saturday, July 17 from 10 a.m.-until.

Returning to the Fair is the fan favorite Scales, Tails & Teeth Gator Road Show (featuring individuals from Animal Planet’s hit show “Gator Boys”). Shows are scheduled for Thursday at 2:30 p.m. & 4:30 p.m.; Friday-Saturday at 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m.

Another favorite is the Birds & Exotics of the World Show on Thursday at 3:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m.; Friday-Saturday shows at 2:30 p.m., 4:30 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.

Bug Blues Live Bug Show will have their fun & informative presentations on Wednesday at 3:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m.; Thursday-Saturday shows at 1:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m.

A Bug Walk-Thru Exhibit will be open daily from 12 p.m.-5 p.m.

FAIR ...................................................................................................................................................... continued from page one

66th Choctaw Indian Princess. Throughout her year-long reign, the new Choctaw Indian Princess will serve as a goodwill ambassador of the Tribe.

Main stage musical entertainment includes Jimmie Allen on Thursday, July 15 at 8:30 p.m., Zach Williams on Friday, July 16 at 8:30 p.m. & Brett Young on Saturday, July 17 at 8:30 p.m.

Local athletes will have the opportunity to compete in this year’s Iron Warrior competition & REZ RUN. Iron Warrior time trial qualifiers in the women’s & men’s divisions will be on Thursday-Friday, July 15-16. The finals is set for Saturday, July 17 at 1 p.m. (women’s) & 3 p.m. (men’s) as top competitors in each division will compete for cash prizes.

The ninth edition of Rez Run will be held Saturday, July 17, beginning at 7 a.m. Participants who haven’t pre-registered can register on-site beginning at 6 a.m. at the Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) track. Races will include a 10K, 5K & one-mile fun run course through parts of the fairgrounds & Pearl River Community. Overall winners will compete for cash prizes also.

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A Bug Walk-Thru Exhibit will be open daily from 12 p.m.-5 p.m.

Shaw’s Discovery Zone, a family fun zone including a rock wall, gyroscope, bounce houses, a park, Chahita Inmi Na Michi (hounds on Choctaw cultural activities) & Yamma Achi ÁwashÓha (language learning bingo game), will be open daily until 5 p.m.

Balloons artist David Talley will be roving the fairgrounds all day with stops at Shawi’s Discovery Zone & Rock-It the Robot will also be roaming & performing for the audience.

Choctaw traditional vendors & other food vendors will be located throughout the fairgrounds, including at Áyipá Village.

For more information, go to www.choctawindianfair.com, or the Choctaw Indian Fair Facebook page.
Charlita Pauline Leila Gibson is the 17-year-old daughter of Melinda Gibson & the late Leland Gibson. She is from the Pearl River Community. A recent graduate of Choctaw Central High School, Charlita plans to attend Hinds Community College in the fall. She is sponsored by Choctaw Tribal Schools.

Melanian Nicole Jimmie is the 18-year-old daughter of Melinda Ben & the late Damian Jimmie. She is from the Pearl River Community. Melanian is a sophomore at Meridian Community College. She is sponsored by the Pearl River Development Club.

Aahliya Marissa Jones is the 21-year-old daughter of Andrew & Delnita Jones. She is from the Tucker Community. Aahliya is a student at Mississippi Valley State University. She is sponsored by the Tucker Development Club.

Sydney Briann Nickey is the 17-year-old daughter of Alyssa Ben. She is from the Pearl River Community. Sydney will be a senior this fall at Neshoba Central High School & plans to attend the University of Mississippi after she graduates. She is sponsored by the Choctaw Health Center Employees Association.

India Sky-Lyn Samuel is the 20-year-old daughter of Shaundareka Thomas & Mark Samuel. She is from the Bogue Chitto Community. This fall, India will continue at Mississippi State University. She is sponsored by the Pearl River Resort Non-Gaming Properties.

Alexis Laken Smith is the 21-year-old daughter of Danny & Roberta Smith. She is from the Bogue Homa Community. Alexis attends Meridian Community College. She is sponsored by the Bok Homa Casino.

Taina DeAnne Thompson is the 17-year-old daughter of Kathleen Phillips & Cecil Thompson. She is from the Crystal Ridge Community. Taina currently attends Nanib Waiya Attendance Center, where she will be a senior this fall. She is sponsored by the Crystal Ridge Development Club.

Jaeden Ariana Wesley is the 16-year-old daughter of Jay & Danielle Wesley. She is from the Standing Pine Community. This fall, Jaeden will attend the Mississippi School for Mathematics & Science. She is sponsored by the Standing Pine Development Club.

One of these thirteen beautiful ladies will be crowned by the outgoing 2019-2021 Choctaw Indian Princess Elisah Monique Jimmie.

Tradition defines the Choctaw Indian Princess. Each year, a special young lady is inducted into an elite & exclusive circle with the honor & responsibility of representing her Tribe. At the moment the Princess is crowned, she becomes not only the ambassador for the Tribe, but also the person little Choctaw girls want to be when they grow up.

Although the Choctaw Indian Fair began in 1949, the princess pageant did not become part of the Fair until 1955. The first official princess, Patsy Sam Buffington, was selected at the tender age of 12, thus beginning a distinguished legacy. This year, we celebrate the 66th year of crowning the newest member of this coveted group.

This year’s contestants, between the ages of 16-21, are sponsored by organizations, such as community development clubs, Tribal businesses, & in some cases, even families & stickball teams.

A panel of judges selects the next Choctaw Indian Princess by awarding points based on communication skills, poise, traditional dress, personality & cultural understanding.

The Choctaw Indian Princess, in turn, celebrates the Tribe’s accomplishments in the forthcoming year as an iconic figure on Tribal, local, state & national levels. As the goodwill ambassador, she represents the Tribe at various events, occasionally alongside the Tribal Chief.

To learn more about the 71st Choctaw Indian Fair, visit www.choctawindianfair.com, or like us on Facebook at Choctaw Indian Fair.
The Choctaw Indian Fair is an exciting time for the Choctaw people & visitors from near and far. It is a time to take in the beauty of the Choctaw culture while experiencing the Choctaw Indian Princess Pageant, Choctaw stickball games, traditional social dancing & the beautiful handmade Choctaw bead work (Chahta Shikalla Átoba).

A year after the 2020 Choctaw Indian Fair was canceled due to COVID-19, bead work artisans were ready to have their works on display & for sale at this year’s Arts & Crafts Pavilion. These vendors include Tribal members Eleanor Vaughn, Everette Sam & Hester Allen.

Eleanor Vaughn is a lifelong member of the Conehatta Community & has been a vendor for over five years. She has been beading since her early teen years under the instruction of her grandmother, Mollie Thomas Anderson.

Beaded, according to Vaughn, is the culture of the Choctaw people & she loves seeing people wearing traditional bead work. Her sister, Darnell Willis, is also a beader & hopes her kids will learn how to bead also.

“If no one picks it up, it will be forgotten,” said Vaughn.

Aside from beading, Vaughn also makes traditional Choctaw shirts & aprons. She began making shirts when her nephew started social dancing. She learned from her mother, Carol Anderson Isaac, & closely observed how her grandmother made hers.

“I love seeing the children wearing their traditional attire & people being shown the Choctaw culture,” she said. “Beaders & traditional artisans were taught by our ancestors & beaders are proud of making bead work.”

There are various, unique designs that many Tribal beaders use when they create their art.

“Some use designs to decorate, but to others it means a lot to their family & them,” said Vaughn.

Everette Sam, originally from the Red Water Community, is a member of the Pearl River Community, is a member of the Pearl River Community. He has been beading for about 15 years & has been a Fair vendor for about the same time.

“The Choctaw Indian Fair is a time to enjoy being with other natives & sharing with other artists in the area,” said Sam.

To him, beading means keeping the Choctaw heritage alive. Depending on a bead work project, Sam could take a day or two to make an item, or a few weeks to complete a full set. Depending on the customer, a bead set often consists of a three-piece beaded medallion, beaded earrings, a collar necklace, ribbon lapels, handkerchief medallion, belt, & sometimes a sash or two.

To prepare for an upcoming Fair, Sam begins beading steadily a few weeks after the conclusion of the previous Fair. When January comes around, Sam is beading everyday.

“Beadings are a tradition from our ancestors to hold the legacy of our Choctaw Tribe,” said Sam.

Hester Allen, member of the Pearl River Community, has been a vendor at the Arts & Crafts Pavilion since it was first built. He has been beading since the age of 9 or 10 & was taught by Marion Williams Isaac, whom he considers the most influential person in bead work, & his mother, Pauline Tubby Wesley. They often kept him focused in developing his beading techniques while urging him to be patient in order to make exceptional, quality work.

“Beadings is a time-honored tradition of our culture,” said Allen. “The Choctaw Indian Fair is a time to showcase all aspects of the Choctaw culture & traditions. In addition, the Fair is also a time to talk to everyone, share ideas & reminisce with the arts & crafts family.”

Bead work has evolved over the years as technology has made it easier to obtain beading materials & also promote their bead work on the Internet.

“I hope bead work will continue to evolve and the works and designs are never forgotten and will stay in the family for years to come. Although the evolution of bead work is good, going back to the basics is also good,” said Allen.
**CHOCTAW INDIAN FAIR DANCE GROUND SCHEDULE**

**WEDNESDAY, JULY 14**

11:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.  Choctaw Traditional Social Dancers  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Phyllis McMillan/Angeline King)  
11:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  Farewell to 2019-2021 Choctaw Indian Princess  
12:00 p.m.-12:30 p.m.  Crystal Ridge Social Dance Group  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Alexander Hickman/Debra Thames)  
1:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.  Generations  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Glenda Bell/Tanisha Imhof)  
1:45 p.m.-2:00 p.m.  Cultural Demonstration  
2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.  Native Dance Group  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Sandra Ben/Randi Williams)  
2:45 p.m.-3:00 p.m.  Cultural Demonstration  
3:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.  Hiháchi Alhíha Atoklo  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Ga’yu’eze Morris/Anna Willis)

**THURSDAY, JULY 15**

11:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.  Bell Family  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Valentina Tubby/Fredrick Bell)  
11:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  Introduction of 2021-2022 Choctaw Indian Princess  
12:00 p.m.-12:30 p.m.  Kabotcha Bóli  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Tara Steve/LaShannon Ferris)  
12:45 p.m.-1:00 p.m.  Introduction of Visiting Princesses  
1:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.  Standing Pine Social Dancers  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Tanya Isaac/Nina Frazier)  
1:45 p.m.-2:00 p.m.  Cultural Demonstration  
2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.  Pearl River Youth Dancers  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Magglenda Willis/Ceanne Thomas)  
2:45 p.m.-3:00 p.m.  Cultural Demonstration  
3:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.  Hilha Imachokma Alhíha  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Priscilla Williams/Laken Vaughn York)  
5:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m.  Tiak Hikiya Himmittowa Hilha  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Benjamin Farve/Erica Farve)

**FRIDAY, JULY 16**

10:00 a.m.-10:30 a.m.  Chahta Alla Himmittowa Alhíha  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Michele Jim/Memorie Henry)  
11:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.  Hilha Cho Social Dancers  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Pandora Dixon Sockey/Alan Martin)  
11:45 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  Introduction of 2021-2022 Choctaw Indian Princess  
12:00 p.m.-12:30 p.m.  Bogue Chitto Social Dancers  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Lola Jackson/Melanie Joe)  
12:45 p.m.-1:00 p.m.  Introduction of Visiting Princesses  
1:00 p.m.-1:30 p.m.  Oka Homma Alla Hilha  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Virginia Rose York/Ryan York)  
1:45 p.m.-2:00 p.m.  Cultural Demonstration  
2:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m.  Chahta Alla Himmittowa Hicha Chipga Alhíha  
(Manager/Co-Manager: Loretta York/Elisa York)
Koni Osi Wins State Games
Kabotcha Toli Gold

The Koni Osi youth stickball team (ages 9-12) claimed gold medals in the State Games of Mississippi 2021 Kabotcha Toli stickball tournament over Beaver Dam 1-0 at Warrior Stadium on the campus of Choctaw Central High School in Choctaw on June 19.

Beaver Dam received silver medals & Fani Lakna Osi claimed bronze medals with a 4-1 win over Oka Homma in the consolation game.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Pearl River Resort are Gold Sponsors for the State Games of Mississippi, which is in its 30th year.

ABOVE, Heath Shoe-make of Koni Osi was named Most Outstanding Player of the tournament.
RIGHT, Koni Osi members pose with 2019-2021 Choctaw Indian Princess Elisah Jimmie after receiving their gold medals.
2021 WSS BRACKETS

Men’s Division

1. UNIFIED
   Tue 7/8
   9:00 p.m.

2. BEAVER DAM
   Fri 7/9
   9:00 p.m.

3. WOLFPACK
   Sat 7/10
   10:30 p.m.

4. PEARL RIVER
   Sat 7/10
   9:00 p.m.

5. TVSHKAHOMMA
   Wed 7/14
   10:15 p.m.

6. WARRIORS
   Mon 7/12
   10:00 p.m.

7. TIAK HIKIYA
   Tue 7/13
   10:00 p.m.

8. KONI HATA
   Fri 7/9
   10:30 p.m.

9. OKA HOMMA
   Thu 7/15
   10:15 p.m.

10. WORLD SERIES STICKBALL CHAMPIONS

Women’s Division

1. BEAVER DAM
   Thu 7/8
   8:00 p.m.

2. OKA HOMMA OHÖYO
   Fri 7/9
   8:00 p.m.

3. NATIVES
   Mon 7/12
   7:00 p.m.

4. TALI OHÖYO
   Sat 7/10
   6:00 p.m.

5. BÖK ČITO OHÖYO
   Sat 7/10
   8:00 p.m.

6. PEARL RIVER
   Mon 7/12
   7:00 p.m.

7. LADY WARRIORS
   Mon 7/12
   9:00 p.m.

8. TVSHKAHOMMA
   Sat 7/10
   7:00 p.m.

9. TUCKER ALHINA
   Tue 7/13
   7:00 p.m.

10. WORLD SERIES STICKBALL CHAMPIONS

   Fri 7/16
   11:30 p.m.
Men’s 35+ Division

BEAVER DAM

Mon 7/12
8:00 p.m.

INDEPENDENTS

Fri 7/9
7:00 p.m.

TVSHKAROMMA

Fri 7/16
10:15 p.m.

OKA HOMMA

Mon 7/12
8:00 p.m.

KONI HATA

Tue 7/13
8:00 p.m.

BOK CITO

Pushmataha
Division (Ages 10-13)

PEARL RIVER

Tue 7/8
5:00 p.m.

NVIA

Sat 7/9
5:00 p.m.

KONI OSI

Tue 7/13
5:00 p.m.

BOK CITO

Fri 7/7
5:00 p.m.

OKA HOMMA

Wed 7/14
5:00 p.m.

FANI LAKNA OSI

Mon 7/12
5:00 p.m.

WARRIORS

Tulli Okchi Ishko
Division (Ages 14-17)

Pearl River

Wed 7/14
6:00 p.m.

Bok Cito

Fri 7/16
6:00 p.m.

Tiak Hikya

Fri 7/9
6:00 p.m.

Warriors

Sat 7/10
5:00 p.m.

Beaver Dam

Thu 7/15
6:00 p.m.

Koni Hata

Koni Hata

Fri 7/16
6:00 p.m.

Himitta

Mon 7/12
6:00 p.m.

Oka Homma
In Memoriam

When a Tribal member passes, it impacts our whole Tribe. The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has lost many Tribal members—a great-grandparent, grandparent, father, mother, sister, brother, child, relative or friend. Many families have experienced losses and are still mourning. They take comfort in the memories and knowing that their loved one is gone, but never forgotten. May God bless all the families who have lost someone very special to them.

We are honored to recognize the individuals that have passed away these two years. Their names are listed in chronological order starting from June 2019 to May 2021.

Harrison Hickman
Baby Boy Clemons
Nazayvian Shaw Cotton
James William Cotton
Kaylin Telia Frazier
Milton Van Farve
Mary Bell Morris
Jaylion Denard Jim
Jolena Cheryl McMillan
Laura Lee Willis
Keshea Shentell Hickman Perez
Loula Zell Phillips Jim
Terry Frank Billie
Edna Ivey Stephens Smith
Jimmy Hickman
Jason Hilohah York
Michael D. Wallace
Cynthia Rose Silvio
Wilkie Ellis Frazier, III
Randy Elliott Meely
Maxwell Ketcher
Dustin Kane Wallace
Jeffrey Dale Hickman
Antonio Xavier Hernandez
Karen Kay Willis
Junior Lee Comby
Shane Daryl Thomas
Norman Ray Shoemake
Ferry Lee King
Ronnie Eugene Thomas
Mary Kay Thompson
Hanzel Patrick Isaac, Sr.
Mack Charles Isaac
Roscoe Willis, Sr.
Mark Wayne Stephens
Sharon Solomon Gibson
Elisjean Mingo Hickman
Henry Charles Farmer
Mary Jane Billy
Cathleen Thomas

Priscilla Ann Clemons
Joyce Lynn Jimmie King
Levon Bell
Edward Wesley
Joshua Wayne Henry
Ida Dixon Billie
Mark C. Jim
Jarrit Coleman Gibson
Vernon Thomas
Tessa Mae Sanders
Dlores Ann Bell
Bernice Frazier
Jeffery Willis, Sr.
Lester Grant Willis
Doris Lynn Billie
Roger Richardson Smith
Preston Edward Isaac
Regina John Isaac
Pamela Kay King Melendez
Katie Willis Thompson
Rachel L. Tubby Wallace
Natalie Nicole King
Myrtle Sockey Dixon
Maurice Gibson Calistro
Day’Leann Daleiya Phillips
Janice Kay York
Annie Sue Lewis
Betty Joyce Bell
Russell Vaughn, Sr.
Calvin James Isaac
Lennie Mae Lewis Comby
Judy Cotton Perez
Salina Jim Willis
Shelby Lee Cotton
Benjamin Bell
Errol Jermaine Bell
Wayne Williams
Darly Lee Hickman
Gregory Keith Tubby
Bruce Nydell Jackson
Russell Eugene Taylor
RJ Willis
Patrick Lee Willis
Linda Fay Champion
William Scott Tubby, Sr.
Sally Mae Steve
Jesus Morales Sardina, Jr.
Carl Henry Steve
James Russell Thomas, Sr.
Robert Earl Comby, Sr.
Rosie Etta Joe
Cyd Bruce Allen
Amanda Tassie Isaac
Billy Joe Gibson
Johnnie Ray Dixon
Kimball Nelson Willis
Harold Jefferson
Mary Alice Anderson Willis
Clay Lee Jim
Tamara Lydall Willis
Shirley Ann Wilson
Sally Bell
Jason Todd Chickaway
Robert Taylor Steve
Harlan Briscoe
Sheila Rivera
Gwendal Sue John
Ted Bowen John
Billy Wayne Thomas
DeWayne Cotton, Sr.
Darryl Druffus Hickman
Devin Pierre Johnson, Jr.
Rebecca Denise Alex
Sandra Jane Willis Billy
Eric Dewitt Jackson
Veronica Sue Shoemake York
Micah Jude Anthony Tubby
Newman Bell
Lucy F. Morris
Hilda Willis Stephens

Frankie Lee Willis
Karl Willis
Allison Starr Abbasi
Christopher Mesteth
Reba Sockey Jim
Ferlin Thomas
Christopher Orlando Isaac
Kevin Grant Isaac
Nellie Allen Sam
John Paul Smith
Norma Sue Briscoe Steve
Harlan Bell
Judy Lynn Isaac
Geraldine Isaac
Meriva Anderson Williamson
McArthur John
Leola Isaac Hernandez
Frank K. Bell, Jr.
Redina Tubby John
Ryan Charles Bell
Milton Chapman
Laurine John Jackson
Nadine Willis
Zayden Tracey Lewis
Gregory Alan Nicky
Sampson Billy
John Michael John
Flora Marie Gibson
Maurine Amos Mingo
Richard James Isaac
Enos Earnest Bell
Rose Alana Tubby Cutler
Jennie Lee Willis Roa
Ronald Dewayne Willis
Herman Billie
Jo Ann Amos Willis
Veronica Frazier Thomas
Amanda Renee Frazier
Howard Travis Tubby, Sr.
Daniel Clark Billy, Sr.
Rosie C. Eaves
Michael B. Jackson, Sr.
Marvel Begay Jim
Nylon Dwayne Thomas
Rebecca Ann Wilson
Gunnar Dewayne Tubby
Gloria Nell McMillan
Pamela Dee Stoliby
Rev. Robert Paul Tubby, Sr.
Hamilton McMillan
Gone, But Never Forgotten
Remembering Our Notable Fair Artisans

RJ WILLIS (Pearl River) - Prior to his death in February 2020, RJ could be seen at many CCHS sporting events and with the Elderly Center dance group with a fiddle in hand. RJ was a chanter for many years, and as he got older, solely played the fiddle. RJ Willis taught many of his children, grandchildren, and others to chant and play the fiddle, and they have continued his legacy to this day. His ability to play fiddle was a vital aspect during what many consider as their favorite past time, the Choctaw House Dance.

LUCY MORRIS (Bogue Chitto) – Prior to the COVID pandemic, Miss Lucy was a staple at cooking events with the Cultural Affairs Program and was a chanter. As a revered elder in the Bogue Chitto Community, Miss Lucy was asked to tell the migration story at one of our Nanih Waiya Day celebrations. It was a story she heard as a little girl, told her family and recited that day. Miss Lucy passed away May 2020, but her legacy and version of the Choctaw creation story were passed on to yet another generation.

BENNY MITCH (Pearl River) – An artist whose work can be seen across Choctaw Tribal lands in homes, offices, and in print, Benny loved to draw and would draw anything asked of him. He didn’t like to have his picture taken, instead preferring his artwork to be an extension of himself. His drawings have been used by Chahta Immi Cultural Center and the Tribe for many print pieces. Mr. Benny passed in June 2020. Today many of his drawings hang in the Tribal Office and the Office of Public Information.

These beautiful souls will never be forgotten. Gone far too soon, but their memory will always be in our hearts and remembered because of what they left behind, not just to their families, but to this Tribe.

JUNE 2021
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