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ECHO PERFORMING ARTS FESTIVAL TO BE HOSTED BY THE MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians will be hosting the ECHO Performing Arts Festival at the Philadelphia/Neshoba County Arts Council Theatre, located at 311 Byrd Avenue in Philadelphia, MS, on Tuesday, February 23, 2010 at 7:00 PM.

ECHO's Performing Arts Festival, now in its tenth season, brings together cultural performers from Massachusetts, Hawaii, Alaska and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to create a collaborative performance art piece, based on a shared theme.

This year's theme, Celebrate — Song, Dance & Story! highlights how stories, music and dance convey cultural traditions and knowledge from one generation to another and across geographical borders. Local performer, Curtis "Buck" Willis, Jr., a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, will be traveling with the Festival from mid-January to mid-March 2010, visiting Alaska, Hawaii and the continental United States.

Audiences will learn about the customs and traditions of our country's Native and immigrant cultures and have an opportunity to compare and contrast them with each other and with their own traditions, developing an appreciation for all.

The MBCI Cultural Preservation Program is a grantee of Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations (ECHO), a project of the United States Department of Education. This award is shared by six partner organizations from Alaska, Hawaii, Massachusetts, and Mississippi. The partners create culture-based learning experiences for students, teachers and communities through public programs, teacher resources, student programs, publications, and internships. ECHO partner organizations seek to enhance appreciation of regional heritage and to facilitate dialogue and understanding between communities and individuals.

There is no fee for admission. For more information visit www.echospace.org/about or call the MBCI Cultural Preservation Program at (601) 650-7331.

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The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, under the esteemed leadership of Miko Beasley Denson, has an enrolled membership of over 10,000 and is the only federally recognized tribe in the State of Mississippi. Headquartered in the Pearl River community, near Philadelphia, Mississippi, the Tribe has emerged as a leader in economic development. The Tribe provides a range of governmental services for its members including schools, a hospital, medical clinics, police and fire protection, courts, an elderly center, among many others.