

# TRIBAL PROFILE



## **Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians**

*Office of the Tribal Chief*

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**THE MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW  
INDIANS IS THE ONLY FEDERALLY  
RECOGNIZED TRIBE IN  
MISSISSIPPI. THE  
TRIBE HAS MORE THAN 10,000  
ENROLLED MEMBERS.**

## **THE TRIBE**

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The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is the only federally recognized American Indian tribe in Mississippi. Residing primarily in east central Mississippi, the Tribe is organized under the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) of 1934, as amended. The Tribe's constitution was ratified in April 1945. Tribal enrolled membership is over 10,000 individuals, all of whom have at least a 50% quantum degree of Choctaw blood. Half of the Tribal population is under the age of 25.

An organizational chart for the Tribe is attached to this profile in order to illustrate the governmental structure and oversight responsibilities for all aspects of Tribal operations. Organizational information is provided for the Executive Branch of Tribal government, as well as the Legislative Branch. In addition, the Executive Branch's Government Services Division and Business Enterprise Division are shown. More detailed information about the Tribe, the Tribal government, Choctaw economic, educational, and community development, and Choctaw history and culture is available on the internet at the following web address: [www.choctaw.org](http://www.choctaw.org).

The Tribe owns and operates a diversified portfolio of manufacturing, service, retail, hospitality, and construction enterprises. They provide permanent, full-time jobs for Tribal members and area residents, while also generating tax-equivalent Tribal revenues to fund government services such as the construction of new schools, strengthened educational programs, full academic scholarships for Tribal members, health care clinics and medical services, police, security, and fire protection, land management and environmental resources protection, road improvements, youth recreation and employment opportunities, and many other basic services to the Choctaw people.

The success of Choctaw enterprises has enabled the Tribe to become more self-reliant and self-sufficient, while making a significant and very favorable economic impact on the surrounding non-Indian communities. The Tribe is now one of Mississippi's top five largest private employers, with over 5,750 employees. Career opportunities on the Reservation are expected to increase over the next four years with the continued growth of the Choctaw TechParc, Pearl River Resort and a number of other new initiatives that are already underway.

The most recent Economic Impact Study revealed that the Tribe's economic impact on the State of Mississippi exceeded \$1.2 billion. Future impact is anticipated to be even greater as the Tribe continues its successful diversification efforts.

## THE LAND

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The Choctaw Indian Reservation contains more than 35,000 acres situated throughout Mississippi in ten different counties. Most of this land is held in trust for the Tribe by the federal government. The Tribe has eight officially recognized Choctaw Indian communities. Their names, in alphabetical order, are Bogue Chitto, Bogue Homa, Conehatta, Crystal Ridge, Pearl River, Red Water, Standing Pine, and Tucker. Pearl River, located in Neshoba County, is the largest Choctaw Indian community, and is the site of Tribal government headquarters.

## THE GOVERNMENT

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The Choctaw Tribal government operates under the auspices of the Tribe's constitution, ratified in 1945, revised in 1975, and amended in 2006. In 1945 a representative, democratic form of Tribal government was established. Representation is provided for all eight Choctaw communities and all Tribal members. Under Choctaw constitutional rules, the Tribal Chief is elected at large every four years, and no term limits are imposed on this position. A 17-member Tribal Council, all of whom are elected for four-year terms, governs the Tribe. The Tribe's Constitution and Bylaws vests the Tribal Council with legislative and policy-making authority. The Tribal Chief is the principal executive officer of the Tribe and is in charge as the leader in carrying out the policies and regulations of Tribal government and for management of Tribal businesses.

The Choctaw Tribal government has been of key importance in making Tribal economic development possible, and it is through the Tribal government and the exercise of Choctaw Self-Determination that major Choctaw goals are being accomplished.

**TRIBAL CHIEF PHYLISS J. ANDERSON**  
IS THE FOURTH DEMOCRATICALLY  
ELECTED TRIBAL CHIEF OF THE  
MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW  
INDIANS SINCE THE ADOPTION OF  
THE TRIBE'S MODERN CONSTITUTION  
IN 1945. SHE IS ALSO THE FIRST  
FEMALE CHIEF ELECTED IN MBCI  
TRIBAL HISTORY.

## THE OVERVIEW OF ACHIEVEMENT

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During the past four decades, the Tribe has been experiencing a rebirth socially, economically, and educationally largely because of strong, stable Tribal governmental leadership. Good Tribal government has made, and continues to make, an extraordinary and very important difference in the lives of the Choctaw citizens. Since 1979, with the first stages of economic development being established, the Tribal government has grown into a very large and complex organizational structure. The Tribe is well known and highly respected for its successful exercise of Choctaw Self-Determination, and for its serious-minded approach to good government and good business.

The Tribe in general, and the Choctaw Tribal government particularly, have long enjoyed wide recognition as an industrious, progressive, and fair business partner. Although outstanding progress toward greater self-reliance is being achieved by the Tribe, the effort must continue, and a great deal of work remains to be done in the years ahead.

## THE CREATION OF JOBS

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The Tribal government leaders have worked hard to create approximately 5,750 jobs since 1969, when the first phase of an 80-acre Choctaw Industrial Park opened. Today the Tribe is one of Mississippi's top five largest private employers, and is the largest employer in east central Mississippi. The Tribe owns and operates seventeen business divisions, under seven different parent companies. With the relatively small size of the Choctaw population, 50% of the Tribe's employees are non-Indian. The Tribe has created far more jobs than there are Tribal members in the workforce to fill the positions. So the economic expansions that the Tribe is undertaking are very beneficial to the residents of surrounding communities, in addition to the Choctaw workforce.

THE TRIBE IS ONE OF MISSISSIPPI'S  
TOP FIVE LARGEST PRIVATE EMPLOY-  
ERS, EMPLOYING MORE THAN 5,750  
EMPLOYEES.

## THE BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

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The Tribe's positive reputation for business know-how is recognized nationally and internationally for the success gained in lifting the Tribe from poverty to prosperity through economic achievement and the creation of a diversified industrial economy both on and off the Reservation. The Tribe is pro-business and has found great confidence in its work capabilities and quality for a broad variety of industries.

Over the past forty years, the Tribe has succeeded in business relationships with such major U.S. corporations as Ford Motor Company, Delphi Packard, Daimler-Chrysler, General Motors, Caterpillar, Club Car, Valeo Sylvania, Federal-Mogul, Bergstrom, Navistar International, Blue Dot, McDonald's, Pepsi-Co, Panasonic, AAI Corporation and Harman International, just to name a few of the Choctaws' customers and business partners. In the years preceding legalized gaming in Mississippi, the Tribe successfully created more than 2,000 jobs by manufacturing automotive wire harnesses, speakers and greeting cards, among others. The Mississippi Choctaws' capabilities and product lines are highly diversified and include the following categories:

- Engineering (Systems, Electrical, Software and Mechanical)
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Military Robotic Applications
- Laboratory Services
- Research and Development
- Engineering Services
- Nursing Home Operations
- Printing and Direct Mail
- Plastic Molding and Packaging
- General Contracting
- Retail / Commercial Development and Operations
- Commercial Laundry
- Resort Development and Operations
- Advertising Agency

WITH RELATIVELY SMALL SIZE OF THE CHOCTAW POPULATION, 50% OF THE TRIBE'S EMPLOYEES ARE NON-INDIAN.

**GAMING IS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPTION AVAILABLE TO TRIBES RESIDING IN GAMING STATES. TRIBES CHOOSING TO OPEN CASINOS ON THEIR LANDS ALSO TAKE ON THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH OWNING AND OPERATING THOSE CASINOS.**

## **THE ADVENT OF GAMING**

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From the late 1970s through the early 1990s, the Tribe reinvested business revenues to expand its manufacturing facilities to improve operations and create employment. There was, however, very little discretionary profit available in manufacturing. In order to generate increased revenues for the operation of the Tribal government, the Tribe chose to commence gaming on the Reservation when it became legalized in Mississippi. Contrary to some opinions, Indian gaming is not a federal program designed to aid tribes. Gaming is an economic development option available to tribes residing in gaming states. Those tribes choosing to open casinos on their lands also take on all of the risks associated with owning and operating those casinos.

## **THE FEDERAL LAW**

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On October 17, 1988, the 100th Congress of the United States enacted the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), Public Law 100-497. This Congressional action allows Indian tribal governments to open Class III casinos in states where there is a state policy allowing gaming, and it provides an administrative process for regulating gaming on Indian lands. The Act's stated purpose is "...promoting tribal economic development, self-sufficiency, and strong tribal governments."

The IGRA requires that each Indian tribe interested in pursuing gaming first strike a compact or agreement with the state in which the tribe is located, outlining how the casino will be regulated. The Tribal/State compact is a legal contract between three sovereign governments - tribal, state, and federal. According to the Act, Indian casinos are not subject to local, state, or federal taxation; the revenues flow as tax-equivalent funds to the Tribal government to provide governmental services to Tribal members.

## **THE LEGALIZATION OF GAMING IN MISSISSIPPI**

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During regular and special-called sessions in 1989 and 1990, the Mississippi State Legislature amended the Mississippi Code of 1972 and legalized dockside gaming - thereby opening the way for the Tribe to have the right to begin gaming on Choctaw Indian land in accordance with the IGRA.

## THE REINVESTMENT OF EARNED INCOME

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Since the Tribe's Silver Star Hotel and Casino opened in the summer of 1994, it has been successful. The Golden Moon Hotel, which opened in 2002, now with its Arena concert venue, has also been successful. In December 2010, the Tribe opened its latest addition to the Choctaw Resort Development Enterprise, which is the Bok Homa Casino located in the Bogue Homa community in Jones County, Mississippi. This new casino is greatly exceeding the Tribe's expectations. The Tribal government's tax-equivalent revenue base has increased the Tribe's self-reliance and economic stability. The Tribe has managed to become more self-supporting, and is moving away from dependence upon the federal government. The creation of more and more jobs and the increasing diversification of the Reservation economy are benefiting the entire region of east central Mississippi.

In the days of substantial dependence on the federal government, there was never sufficient funding to meet all of the needs that the Tribal government had identified locally. Therefore, the Tribe is now using its tax-equivalent revenues to catch up from years of neglect and under-funding.

Overall Tribal business revenues in FY 10 exceeded \$400 million. These revenues were earned by Tribally-owned business enterprises for which the Tribe assumed all risk and cost of development.

The Tribal government is reinvesting tax-equivalent Tribal revenues, as follows:

- to construct new schools on the Reservation
- to construct new early childhood centers
- to provide academic scholarships to Tribal students

In 1994, Tribal government leaders established the Choctaw Tribal Scholarship Program. Since its beginning, the scholarship program has enabled over 2,413 Choctaw students to attend at least one class at the college or university of their choice and to pursue training, educational goals, and careers of their choice. To date, 1,745 students have been enrolled on a full-time basis. Students may choose to pursue postsecondary educational programs at the vocational/technical level or academic programs which lead to associate, bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees.

**IN 1994, TRIBAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS ESTABLISHED THE CHOCTAW TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM. THE PROGRAM HAS ENABLED OVER 2,413 CHOCTAW STUDENTS TO ATTEND AT LEAST ONE CLASS AT THE COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY OF THEIR CHOICE.**

With 494 students earning two or more degrees, the program has provided scholarship assistance to 2,413 Choctaw scholars who have completed 679 degrees and/or certificates. The Tribal government's investment in higher education is excellent and yields long-term benefits for those choosing to attend school. Tribal members who complete their degrees on Choctaw scholarships are not required to return to the Choctaw Indian Reservation to work, but many do. Tribal scholarships are awarded without strings attached - except that the students must maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average and complete a defined number of credits each semester. Other investments include:

- to start up Boys and Girls Clubs on the Reservation
- to build new community-based healthcare clinics
- to construct a new physical fitness and wellness center
- to strengthen diabetes care and management
- to build new fire departments
- to provide Tribal security services
- to construct a new Choctaw Justice Complex to contain a police station, courtroom and judges' chambers, legal counsel's offices, and adult and juvenile detention facilities
- to construct a new Animal Control Shelter
- to grow and diversify Choctaw economic development
- to build new housing for Choctaw community residents
- to improve roads throughout the Reservation
- to increase the Tribe's land base
- to build a Tribal Elder activity center
- to fund educational and training programs on the Reservation to help Tribal members get better, higher-skilled and higher-salaried jobs
- to strengthen wellness and elder-care facilities and services
- to build water treatment plants to serve Choctaw communities
- to improve opportunities for Choctaw youth
- to provide lighted ball fields and swimming pools in all Tribal communities
- to build recreational and sports facilities
- to increase outreach toward tourism
- to maintain native Choctaw language
- to preserve Choctaw heritage and art forms

**TO DATE, 1745 TRIBAL STUDENTS  
HAVE BEEN ENROLLED ON A FULL-TIME  
BASIS AT A COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY  
OF THEIR CHOICE TO PURSUE  
TRAINING, EDUCATIONAL GOALS,  
AND CAREERS OF THEIR CHOICE.**

The Tribe is achieving these important goals through the successful exercise of self-governance and Choctaw Self-Determination. The Tribal government is hard at work making a meaningful and positive difference in the lives of all Choctaw people in Mississippi, and it is extraordinary that the Tribe is generating the tax-equivalent revenues necessary to make this work possible through its own initiatives, without financial dependence on the federal or state government.

## **THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

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The Tribe encourages education, advanced training, and entrepreneurship among the Choctaw population. The Tribal government, the various Choctaw businesses and enterprises, and the Tribe's hotels and casinos offer tremendous opportunities and benefits to Tribal members wishing to enter into contractual agreements with these Tribal enterprises to provide goods and services required. This approach helps to create individual prosperity, and is a step away from dependence on government and toward self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Good things are happening in Choctaw, Mississippi.

## **THE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONSHIPS**

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The good working relationships between the Tribal government and the local, state, and federal governments are long-standing and very strong. These relationships are based upon mutual respect and meaningful cooperation. In 1997, the State government entered into an Executive Accord with the Tribal government, and, as a result, the two groups exercise an effective commitment to mutually beneficial goals and smooth government-to-government relationships among and between various departments in both the State and Tribal governments. In the Accord, the Tribe and State formally recognized each other's sovereignty and rights; at the same time they recognized each other's need for cooperation in order to create greater understanding and efficiency between the two governments.

## **THE TRIBE AS A GOOD NEIGHBOR**

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The Choctaw Tribal government has consistently shown itself to be a good and helpful neighbor. Currently, and over the past several years, the Tribe has regularly assisted area county and city governments in their work by contributing either direct financial assistance to them or donating goods and

**THE TRIBE HAS CONSISTENTLY SHOWN ITSELF TO BE A GOOD NEIGHBOR THROUGH REGULAR ASSISTANCE TO CITY AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS IN THE FORM OF DIRECT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OR DONATING GOODS AND EQUIPMENT TO THEM.**

**AN INNOVATIVE, FORWARD THINKING APPROACH TO BUSINESS HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE TRIBE'S STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE. TO FURTHER THEIR ECONOMIC SUCCESS, THE TRIBE IS MOVING FROM TRADITIONAL MANUFACTURING INTO HIGH TECHNOLOGY PURSUITS.**

equipment to them. Examples include providing funding to strengthen the Philadelphia Police Department and Sheriff's Department, donating a new police car to the City of Union, donating funds to the City of Sandersville for law enforcement, and donating funds to the City of Meridian for tourism. Further examples of good stewardship include the Tribe's donation of surplus Tribal vehicles to area law enforcement offices, donating funds and equipment to local volunteer fire departments and other civic organizations, cooperating with area boards of supervisors in order to make necessary improvements to county roads by providing funding for their maintenance and expansion, and providing space for an American Red Cross Distribution Center in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, among other examples of Tribal assistance. The Tribe is working with its neighbors in cooperative and friendly ways.

## **THE CONTINUING ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION**

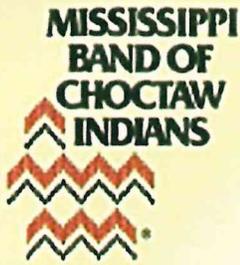
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Looking at the Tribe's increasing business growth, one can clearly see that the Tribe's economic diversification has been an important key to Choctaw overall success. In December 2010, the Tribe expanded its gaming operations by adding Bok Homa Casino in Jones County, Mississippi. This new business venture is now pumping new life into the Tribal economy and is helping not only to preserve jobs on the Choctaw Indian Reservation, but has actually created over 300 new jobs. Also in 2010, the Resort reconfigured its Golden Moon Hotel facility to include The Arena, which is a highly successful concert venue for big-name entertainers. MBCI is also succeeding in its efforts to get a foot-hold in the high-tech industry, thus bringing more high-skill, high-salaried jobs to the Reservation. In 2005, the Tribe marked another milestone with the opening of the Choctaw TechParc. The TechParc is a 154-acre business community that caters to the needs of today's high-tech industries. The master-planned development offers competitive advantages that are not available anywhere else. The TechParc is already home to several thriving technology-based companies engaged in aerospace services, environmental services, and military equipment manufacturing, among others. The TechParc also features the Integrated Technologies Training Center, a 10,000-square foot workforce training facility.

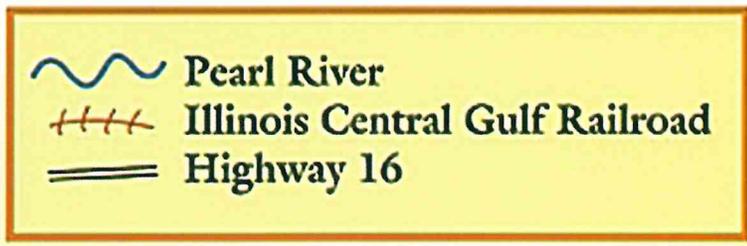
The Tribe is moving away from traditional manufacturing and into more advanced, technical, and highly sophisticated work. The Tribe also chose to include gaming, hospitality, and entertainment in its economic mix to meet public demand and further diversify through the development of a major family destination resort that is unrivaled in the Southeastern U.S. This is, of course, the Pearl River Resort at Choctaw, Mississippi, encompassing the Silver Star Hotel and Casino, the Golden Moon Hotel and The Arena concert venue, Geyser Falls Water Theme Park, Clear Water Key and Beach Club, and the 36-hole championship golf club, Dancing Rabbit, designed by Tom Fazio and Jerry Pate. And as of December 2010, the Bok Homa Casino is the newest facet of Pearl River Resort.

That the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is a major contributor to Mississippi's economic growth is extraordinarily evident. That the Tribal government is an outstanding, upright, and highly respected neighbor in all aspects of its business dealings and government-to-government working relationships has been demonstrated time and again. Examples of Choctaw generosity, good stewardship, professionalism, and overall fairness to others abound. The Tribe is making positive contributions to the State of Mississippi in a number of meaningful ways. Through the exercise of Choctaw Self-Determination, the Tribe and its economic, educational, and social achievements are coming into the limelight.

**THE MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW  
INDIANS IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO  
THE STATE'S ECONOMIC GROWTH.**



# Location and Geographic Boundaries of Eight Recognized Choctaw Communities in Mississippi





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