Tribe Breaks Ground for New Red Water Clinic

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Red Water community health clinic on Thursday, Sept. 28.

Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson, along with community members and officials from the Choctaw Health Center, Tribal government and local community governments, attended this momentous occasion.

...............see CLINIC, pg. 6

New Safe Room Opens At PRES

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians held a ribbon cutting ceremony on Friday, Sept. 8 for the opening of Pearl River Elementary School’s new $1.6 million Safe Room. The 5,600 square-foot structure is constructed of reinforced concrete and has the capacity to shelter 900 people, which includes PRES students, teachers, staff, and community members.

Built to meet the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) P-361 Safe Room Standards, the room will be able to withstand 250-mile-per-hour winds.

FEMA, through the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, covered 95 percent of the project under the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The Tribe covered 5 percent through Tribal revenue and in-kind donations.

“Pearl River is the largest of seven elementary schools we have in

...............see SAFE ROOM, pg. 5
Halito!
The temperatures are really beginning to cool down, and we are experiencing such beautiful fall scenes around the Reservation.

Several of our Tribal departments and programs will be hosting their annual fall events, and I know how excited many Tribal members are to participate in these fun activities.

I look forward to seeing many of you at these events and enjoying the fun and fellowship together!

**CCHS SOLAR CAR TEAM**

I am pleased to announce that members and support staff of our CCHS Tushka Hashi Solar Car Team traveled to and have safely arrived in Australia for the Bridgestone World Solar Car Challenge. The team will travel a 3,000-km route from Darwin to Adelaide, and they are participating in this race along with other teams of students from over 30 countries.

This is the second time the Solar Car Team has participated in the Challenge, and we know they will well represent our Tribe, the State of Mississippi, Indian Country and the United States.

Thank you to everyone who made donations or supported the team in their fundraising efforts to make this trip possible. I can’t wait to hear about the team members’ experiences when they get back!

**RED WATER CLINIC GROUND BREAKING**

On Thursday, September 28th, we broke ground for the new Red Water community health clinic. This $2.5 million project is funded through Choctaw Health Department funds.

Construction on the new 10,860-square-foot facility will begin in October 2017 and is expected to be completed in the fall of 2018. This facility will be four times larger than the current facility built in 1972, allowing more space for services offered.

This was such a great day for the Tribe. I am so pleased that we will be able to provide this much-needed new and expanded facility for our Tribal members living in the Red Water and Standing Pine communities.

I thank all who are involved in this project and am proud that we are taking another positive step forward in providing quality healthcare for Tribal members.

I also thank members of the Tribal Council, 2017-2018 Choctaw Indian Princess Kassie Lann Cox, Choctaw Health Center and Tribal officials, local government leaders, and especially our community members, for joining us for this wonderful celebration.

I hope to see all of you next year when we cut the ribbon for the new clinic!

**RED WATER/TEC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

As I mentioned in my last column, the Red Water Referendum Election will be held on Thursday, November 16, 2017. The decision that is made in this election will have a great impact on the future of the Tribe.

Chief Anderson offered well wishes to the CCHS Solar Car Team members during a reception at the OTC on Sept. 21. The team traveled to Australia to participate in the World Solar Car Challenge. Pictured above, Chief Anderson with team members Taelor Sockey, Braden Peters, Antonio Bell, Kravon Willis, & Mahali Henry.

Social dancers from Red Water Elementary School, which included recently crowned princesses and braves, pose with Chief Anderson & Choctaw Indian Princess Kassie Cox after their performance at the Red Water clinic groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 28.
Congratulations to all of the princess and brave winners! I know you will do a great job representing your school. Many of these princesses and braves will be participating in upcoming parades, so make sure you give them a smile and a wave when you see them!

**LADY WARRIORS SOFTBALL UPDATE**

The CHHS Lady Warriors slow pitch softball team is having a spectacular season. As I write this column, the team is the 2017 Region IV district champions! I am so proud of our girls and coaches for their hard work and efforts.

Senior Night was held on Saturday, September 30th, and exceptional seniors Jayarsi Mitch, Darien Tubby, LaChrisa Williams, India Samuel, Maleighia Joe and Lauren Ben were recognized and honored in a ceremony before their game against Philadelphia.

These girls are the team leaders, and they are shining examples for the other players to follow. We wish them the best as they prepare for the future!

Playoffs will be held in the next couple of weeks, and I encourage everyone to come out and show your support. Girls, we are with you all the way! GO LADY WARRIORS!

**DRIVEWAY REPAIR PROGRAM**

I want to remind everyone of the Driveway Repair Program I introduced in our July issue of the Choctaw Community News. This project is to provide support to our Tribal Elders living in the Choctaw Tribal communities.

The Driveway Repair Project for Elders, Disabled and/or Handicapped individuals began taking applications in August. Applications are still being accepted now at the Choctaw Elderly Center.

This program is for Tribal Elders, permanently disabled and handicapped individuals that are enrolled members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and who own their home on the Choctaw Reservation.

Funds have been budgeted to provide 100 feet of repair or replacement of the worst driveway sections at the permanent residence for eligible applicants. Driveway repairs will be prioritized based on damage and number of repairs needed.

To learn more about eligibility requirements and/or to fill out an application, please visit the Choctaw Elderly Activity Center or call Gary Williamson at (601) 663-3003.

I look forward to seeing the results of this program to benefit our honored Tribal Elders.

**ADULT SOFTBALL COMPLEX UPDATE**

The next exciting project we are kicking off this fall is the Adult Softball complex. The plans include an area for 8 fields. We plan on finishing and opening with six of the fields completed, and the other two completed as demand requires.

This is phase one of a three phase plan to create an athletic field complex on James Billie Road.

The complexes will be built around concession stands and restrooms. The outfield fences will all measure 220 ft., and have plenty of viewing areas around them in a combination of stands as well as seating areas for lawn chairs.

This will be truly a place where the softball teams in Mississippi will want to come and enjoy a long weekend of softball tournaments.

**HOUSING UPDATES**

We are finishing up the new Tribal Loan Program houses which are part of our Housing Project. These beautiful homes are available for Mortgage, or Lease to Purchase through the Tribal Loan Program.

In the Tucker community we are currently clearing the site for home construction. The next steps will be sewer, water and road placement, followed by construction of the homes. We will begin construction in early spring.

The same is true for the Pearl River housing development on Choctaw Road. Once the BIA approves the road plan, we will initiate sewer, water and road construction, followed closely by home construction.

We are working very hard to keep progress moving forward. I look forward to seeing these neighborhoods built for our growing Tribal population.

**CLOSING**

Although our Mississippi summers are generally mild compared to other areas of the country, we cannot rule out a cold snap or two. So I urge everyone to start preparing for the cold weather.

If you have a loved one who is an elder who uses a wood heater, make sure they have an adequate stock of firewood, and if they do not, have them sign up for the firewood program at the Tribal Member Services office at the Tribal headquarters. Also, make sure your heating appliances are all in good working condition.

You can keep up-to-date on upcoming fall activities through the Tribal website, social media, and of course, here in the Choctaw Community News.

I hope to see you all at these events. I encourage us all to continue to work together for the common good of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Many Blessings,

Phyliss J. Anderson
Tribal Chief
Tribal Distribution Notice

Distribution will be December 5, 2017.

IMPORTANT DEADLINE DATES TO REMEMBER!
Tribal Court (Child Support) - October 20, 2017, at 4:30 p.m.
Direct Deposit - November 6, 2017, at 4:30 p.m.
Other changes listed below - November 6, 2017, at 4:30 p.m.
* If you did not pick up your checks, it will be mailed the next day!
* Our office will not hold any checks for pickup the day after Distribution!
* If your name is not on the check, you are not allowed to pick up another Tribal member’s check!

TRIBAL DISTRIBUTION REMINDERS!
Please help us make the process of receiving your check easier by having the following information current. Please list your children anytime you make any changes, whether to change your last name or address. (All of the following needs to be done & turned in to the Tribal Distribution Office.)
* Over 18 years old (Photo I.D.)
* Custody change (Court Order) - Parents need to fill out the Changes to Tribal Distribution form & the W-4V tax forms if you wish to stop the taxes from taking out once your child/children is released back to you.
* Name changes (Marriage/Divorce with new name on your Social Security card) - It is very important to list your dependants as well on the form.
* Address changes - If you do a forwarding address with your local post office, please fill out an application with our office since the forwarding time does have an expiration. Anytime you do an address change for yourself, always include all of your dependants. We DO NOT accept address changes over the phone.
* 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 is still available!
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 the account holder can do direct deposit. Please do not attempt to use someone else’s account as they will be rejected.

It is very important that you let our office know whenever you close your account & do not wait until after the deadline.

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 at the Tribal Office building in the Finance Department. The forms are available in the lobby or in the Finance Office. You can also visit www.chocaw.org. For more information, contact Barbara Ben, Distribution Manager, at 601-650-1522.
SAFE ROOM .................................. continued from page one

the Choctaw Tribal Schools System, and we wanted to make sure our students have a place of safety in case of severe weather,” said Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson. “I hope we don’t have anything severe, but in case we do, we will make sure our students and staff are all safe here.”

Tornadoes are considered to be the most dangerous and serious natural hazards affecting MBCI communities. In the past 60 years, approximately 201 tornadoes were reported in the counties that contain an MBCI community. These storms resulted in 54 fatalities, approximately 724 injuries and $268 million in property damage.

“We’re excited about the opening of this building,” said PRES Principal Suzanne Hyatt. “We are so thankful to have this safe room on our campus. This building is going to provide safe shelter for our children, our faculty and staff and our school community.”

Architectural and design planning was provided by Major Design Studios of Starkville/Columbus, MS. Project construction was headed by IKBI, Inc., of Choctaw.

Pearl River Resort Cares About the Community

Pearl River Resort maintains a close working relationship with The American Red Cross to provide humanitarian relief after disasters. Money, personal hygiene supplies, and water have all been donated over the past several years.

Two trucks filled with bottled water recently rolled into a supply staging area in Jackson. Matthew Perkins, Resort Executive Vice President of Operations & Marketing (pictured far right), rolled up his sleeves and jumped right in assisting the resort banquets team in unloading the 18 pallets of water.

In all, 1,300 bottles of water will be distributed by the American Red Cross to assist victims of recent hurricanes.

Pictured from left are Matthew Perkins, Executive Vice President of Operations & Marketing; Moses Wallace; Arnado Sam; Decarlo McMillan; James Stribling; Brantley Wash; & Erica Clemmons-Moore, Director of Public Relations, Internal Communications, & Special Projects.
Pearl River Resort Chefs Compete in Challenge

(CHOCTAW, MS) – As part of Pearl River Resort’s culinary training program, Resort chefs were encouraged to enter the Pearl River Resort Culinary Competition 2017: $1,000 Pork Challenge.

The Pork Challenge is a two-part competition with qualifying rounds. Those who advance to the final round compete for a chance to win up to $1,000.

On Sept. 12, qualifying rounds began with 15 chefs competing against one another, preparing dishes that include the key ingredient, pork, as well as mystery ingredients selected by Executive Chef Louis Chatham.

“We have many great chefs at the Resort who are very interested in learning new techniques and striving to become the best of the best in providing greater dining experiences,” stated Chatham, “This competition is a way for our chefs to apply what they have learned in training, use their creativity, and create delicious dishes in a competitive atmosphere.”

Four chefs, Alex Delgado, Noelle Richards, Michael Rush, and Jimmie Smith, advanced to compete in the Live Challenge, which took place on Tuesday, Sept. 19 in the Pearl River Resort exhibition kitchen. The judges scored the contestants as followed:

1st place, $1,000 winner - Michael Rush
2nd place, $500 winner - Alex Delgado
3rd place, $250 winner - Jimmie Smith
4th place, $125 winner - Noelle Richards

For more information on Pearl River Resort and its excellent dining options, visit www.pearlriverresort.com.

Pictured from left are Michael Rush (1st place); Alex Delgado (2nd place); Jimmie Smith ($250); and Noelle Richards ($125).

News From The DOECE

We have begun a new school year & are happy to see all the new children along with the returning children. Our days have been full of activities, getting to know one another, learning routines, & settling into new classrooms.

On Sept. 19, we held our DOECE American Indian Day Princess & Brave pageant. It was a tough decision as all the children were beautiful in their Choctaw attire, but the judges picked two representatives for our program for the 2017-2018 school year.

This year’s Princess is Miss Bailee Frazier of Standing Pine Head Start. She is the daughter of Precious Farve & Tommy Frazier. Our Brave is Mr. Zaine Bell of Pearl River Head Start. He is the son of Amelia Ben & Justin Bell. Congratulations to them & we look forward to seeing them at the Green Corn Festival.

Speaking of which, our 27th Annual Green Corn Festival is set for Friday, Oct. 27 at the Bogue Chitto Elementary School Amphitheater at 10:00 a.m. We invite...

...continued next page
CCHS Receives Laura Bush Foundation Grant

(CHOCTAW, Miss.) – Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) was awarded a $7,000 library grant from the Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries. CCHS is one of 160 schools in 38 states to receive a 2017 grant from the foundation established by the former First Lady of the United States.

"Congratulations to the schools and libraries that have been awarded a 2017 Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries grant!” said Mrs. Laura Bush. “As a former librarian, I know school libraries play an important role in improving student achievement, and with this grant, your librarian will make your library the perfect place for students to fall in love with reading.”

“We are very appreciative to the Laura Bush Foundation for their support of Choctaw Tribal Schools,” said Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson. “Developing a love of reading to provide lifelong learning experiences is one of the greatest legacies our schools can instill in our students.”

The foundation provides grants of up to $7,000 to our nation’s neediest schools so they can extend, update, and diversify the book and print collections in their libraries with the goal of encouraging students to develop a love of reading and learning.

Since its inception in 2002, it has awarded over $14.3 million to more than 2,700 schools across the country. In addition to the annual grants, the “Gulf Coast School Library Recovery Initiative” in 2006 provided nearly $6.5 million to school libraries affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to rebuild book collections lost or destroyed in the storms.

In 2014, The Laura Bush Foundation transitioned from the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region in Washington, D.C. to the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas, Texas, where it is managed as a restricted fund. More information can be found at www.laurabushfoundation.org.
PAB Holds First Meeting of School Year

The Title I Parent Advisory Board (PAB) met August 29 at the Occupational Training Center’s Ayipa Café in Choctaw. Board members and guests enjoyed a meal prepared by the Choctaw Tribal Schools’ Culinary Arts students. PAB Chair Ray Willis recognized Ervin Farmer as the August Outstanding Choctaw Educator. Farmer, a U.S. Army Veteran, has proudly served his country as well as his Tribe. During his 33-year career, he worked 20 years with the Tribal Schools Maintenance Department, 13 years with Environmental Indian Health Services at the old Indian Hospital and the Choctaw Health Center, and Lundy Plumbing Company in Philadelphia. Farmer attended Tucker Elementary School and graduated from Choctaw Central High School and Haskell Institute in Lawrence, Kansas. When asked how the work environment is different now from when he first began, he replied, “There is much more equipment to maintain with fewer employees. Air conditioners, chillers, boilers, and kitchen equipment are more difficult to work on than the basic ones we had in the past.” Farmer comes from a large family, with five sisters and five brothers. Two of his brothers are deceased, as well as his beloved son, Donnie.

Students Donate To Hurricane Relief

The Conehatta Elementary School Beta Club members donated bottled water to Hurricane Harvey victims on Sept. 13. The donation served as a community service project that each Beta student is required to perform. The Beta sponsors thought this would be a great way for our students to help others in time of need. Pictured above are Alissia Sebastian, Haileyna Johnson, Malice Williams, Braylon Smith, Zarius Johnson, Dre-sen Jimmie, Keondrae Anderson, & Arral Frazier. Not pictured are Alannaysia Chickaway & Dominic Bell. Beta sponsors are Kelly Langford & Kendra Anderson.

CES Tutoring Program

Students at Conehatta Elementary School (CES) have opportunities to receive extra help in reading & math through the tutorial program. We have certified teachers on campus Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday of each week to work with students in one-on-one and small group sessions. The teachers also go in the classrooms while instruction & practice are taking place & are available to assist & reinforce the lesson being taught. This gives the teachers the means to give personal attention to students in areas of reading & math. The goal of the program is to reinforce the skills & activities that are being taught in the regular class, which in turn will help with preparation for the end of the year test.

Lady Warrior Seniors Honored

Senior members of the Choctaw Central Lady Warriors were honored during ceremonies prior to their contest against Philadelphia on Saturday, Sept. 30 at the Pearl River Recreational Field. Honored were, from left, Lauren Ben, Jayasri Mitch, India Samuel, Darien Tubby, Maleighia Joe, & LaChrisha Williams.
Activities, Fun Day in Choctaw

A day of fun and activities for the whole family was held on Saturday, Sept. 16 in Choctaw.

The Boys & Girls Club of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians hosted a Day for Kids event at the Pearl River Amphitheater from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Hundreds of participants enjoyed games of bingo, basketball, face painting, bounce houses, prize drawings, and other activities.

Day for Kids is a national initiative that invites adults and kids alike to take one day to celebrate what it means to be a kid! The mission of Day for Kids is to establish a day to celebrate and honor children through the gift of meaningful time.

Research shows that when adults spend meaningful time with kids it helps them develop a positive self-image and a sense of belonging, usefulness and purpose. Now, more than ever, Day for Kids provides adults and kids an opportunity to take a break from their busy lives and celebrate the wonder of life and the fulfillment of spending time together.

At Lake Pushmataha, the Choctaw Wildlife & Parks Department and Mississippi State University Extension Services hosted the 2017 Choctaw Wildlife Jam-boree from 12:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Hundreds came out to enjoy a day dedicated to the great outdoors.

Activities included conservation booths, bow & arrow shoot, a rabbit stick throw, chili & wildlife tasting buffet, canoe rides, fishing competition, a birds of prey presentation, & horseback riding.

The goal of the event was to promote wildlife conservation & outdoor recreational activities through a hands-on arena where all those in attendance enjoyed a taste of the outdoors.

Jackson, Choctaw
Fresh Produce Honored

On September 18-22, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program sponsored Disability Awareness Week activities to raise awareness of disability issues and celebrate successes of workers with disabilities.

Each year, the program honors an employer that has made a significant impact on the employment of qualified individuals who experience disabilities and an individual who experiences a disability and has made a significant personal success in employment.

The theme for 2017 is mirrored after the national theme, “Inclusion Drives Innovation.”

This year’s recipients, Michael Jackson, Sr. as Employee of the Year and Choctaw Fresh Produce as Employer of the Year, were honored during a luncheon at Ronnie’s Steak and Grill in Philadelphia on

see HONORS, pg. 10

Pictured from left are Mary Meruvia, Choctaw Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program Director; Terry Ben, Choctaw Department of Workforce Development Director; Daphne Snow, Choctaw Fresh Produce; Michael Jackson, Sr., Choctaw Fresh Produce; Jason Grisham, Choctaw Economic Development; and Jonathan Williams, Choctaw Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program Horticulture Assistant.
Wednesday, September 20. Theron Denson, Work Adjustment Skills Trainer, said people with disabilities have skills that need to be recognized by potential employers. “Employ individuals with disabilities who also have the strength you need in your organization. Maybe it takes some accommodation or rearrangement of job tasks. The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program staff are here to help you figure this out. Strengthen your workplaces by making them inclusive of all individuals who have the education, training experience and desire to be successful in your workplace.”

Jonathan Williams, Horticulture Assistant, praised Jackson for his work ethic and drive to make a better living for himself during his time at the Work Adjustment Training Greenhouse Component. “He understood what he needed to do to make progress and with a good attitude he accomplished what he set out to do. We hear plenty of good things about Michael at Choctaw Fresh Produce. He is a full-time employee and is a tremendous asset to their program. He has been called their MVP.”

Terry Ben, Department of Workforce Development Director, presented the award to Jackson on behalf of the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program. “I like to say thank you to Vocational Rehabilitation for helping me and to Choctaw Fresh Produce for hiring me,” said Jackson.

Jason Grisham of Choctaw Economic Development accepted the Employer of the Year honor on behalf of Choctaw Fresh Produce. “We’re reaping the rewards now, and we say thank you. Work ethic and attitude is the biggest thing these employees bring with them. Choctaw Produce is growing and if, you haven’t been a part of it, we encourage you to try some of our vegetables.”

Choctaw Fresh Produce has utilized the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program by seeking qualified clients within the program and taking advantage of the on-the-job training provided to clients while breaking down barriers caused by any physical or mental condition that may impact the employee.

Choctaw Fresh Produce, a tribally-owned business established in 2012, began with the goal of providing fresh fruits and vegetables to the tribal community and promoting healthy eating habits. They soon formed a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) share system to make fresh produce available to the public and surrounding businesses.

They have been described by the USDA as a “tribal community striving to regain food sovereignty” and received their organic certification after rigorous standards were met in 2015.

The Choctaw Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program is a part of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Department of Workforce Development and Education Division. Disability Awareness Week activities is made possible by a grant from the Choctaw Community Fund.
Families Remember Homicide Victims

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Family Violence & Victim’s Services (FVVS) hosted a special event at the Pearl River Baptist Church in Choctaw honoring the memories of homicide victims.

The event, held on Thursday, Sept. 28, coincided with the observance of the National Day of Remembrance for Homicide Victims.

Danielle Dixon, Victim Services Program Division Manager, welcomed the families as Robert Ben offered the opening prayer. Nana Frazier provided special music.

“We know all of you have been through tragic circumstances and it has been very difficult for you. We honor you for having the courage and strength to withstand all that you are having to deal with,” said Kim Neal, Victim Assistance Therapist.

“We, at Family Violence, help family members who have been through a homicide. We provide counseling and it doesn’t matter if a homicide was a month ago or 20 years ago, if you need to talk to someone about what you are going through, we can help.”

FVVS also assist family members of victims with transportation to court proceedings if needed and drafting impact statements to be read during the sentencing phase.

Guest speaker Rae Nell Vaughn, MBCI Chief of Staff, said none of us can solve this crisis alone, but by working together we can make a real difference in our homes, communities and nation.

“We take this special day of remembrance to reflect upon the lives of those we have lost, but we must keep all victims of homicide in the forefront of our thoughts. We do not want any more victims. We want these tragedies to end.”

Looking around the sanctuary, Vaughn said she saw love and compassion, both powerful human emotions that can be shared with each other.

“We can all work together to provide support and assistance to the survivors while working to create a world free of violence.”

A listing of Tribal member homicide victims was called out as Priscilla Morris, Vulnerable Adult Specialist, lit candles in their memory.


A luncheon was held at the conclusion of the event in the fellowship hall.

Robert & Charlotte Hullinger, of Cincinnati, formed Parents of Murdered Children following the 1978 murder of their 19-year-old daughter, Lisa, while she was studying in Germany.

Suicide Prevention Month Observed

Submitted by Choctaw Behavioral Health

WHY ADDRESS SUICIDE PREVENTION?

Many American Indian/Alaskan Native (AI/AN) communities experience an elevated suicide rate. In fact, suicide has a profound impact on the health of AI/AN individuals, families, & communities, with rates 1.7 times higher than the overall national average.

AI/AN young people ages 15-34 make up 64% of all suicides in Indian Country & is the 2nd leading cause of death for this age range. According to the 2007 CDC vital statistics, suicide is the 8th leading cause of death for all AI/AN age groups.

So, despite the strengths of AI/AN families & communities, suicide continues to remain a devastating event.

RISK FACTORS FOR SUICIDE AMONG AI/AN PEOPLE?

Risk factors include mental health disorders & stigma, substance abuse, intergenerational & historical trauma, family history of suicide or violence, family disruption/domestic violence, history of suicide attempts, physical or terminal illness, hopelessness, feeling alone, & community-wide issues.

PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR AI/AN PEOPLE?

Factors that protect AI/AN youth & young adults against suicidal behavior are a sense of belonging to one’s culture, a strong tribal/spiritual bond, the opportunity to discuss problems with family or friends, feeling connected to family, & positive emotional health.

Other factors include tribal resources & services such as a supportive healthcare system which individuals & families can utilize when needed.

……………………see SUICIDE, pg. 12
**SUICIDE MYTHS & FACTS**

- **Myth:** No one can stop a suicide, it is inevitable.
- **Myth:** Confronting a person about suicide will only make them angry & increase the risk of suicide.
- **Myth:** Only experts can prevent suicide.
- **Myth:** Suicidal people keep their plans to themselves.
- **Myth:** Once a person decides to complete suicide, there is nothing anyone can do to stop them.

- **Fact:** If people in a crisis get the help they need, they will probably never be suicidal again.
- **Fact:** Asking someone directly about suicidal intent lowers anxiety, opens up communication & lowers the risk of an impulsive act.
- **Fact:** Suicide prevention is everybody’s business & anyone can help prevent these strategies.
- **Fact:** Most suicidal people communicate their intent sometime during the week preceding their attempt.
- **Fact:** Suicide is the most preventable kind of death, & almost any positive action may save a life.

**WARNING SIGNS**

**Behavioral Clues**

*Previous suicide attempt (#1 predictor of suicide);
*Acquiring a gun or stockpiling pills;
*Co-occurring depression, moodiness, hopelessness (better predictor than depression);
*Putting personal affairs in order;
*Giving away prized possessions;
*Sudden interest or disinterest in religion;
*Drug or alcohol abuse, or relapse after a period of recovery;
*Unexplained anger, aggression & irritability.

**Situational Clues**

*Being fired or being expelled from school;
*A recent unwanted move;
*Loss of any major relationship;
*Death of a spouse, child, or best friend, especially if by suicide;
*Diagnosis of a serious or terminal illness;
*Sudden unexpected loss of freedom/fear of punishment;
*Anticipated loss of financial security;
*Loss of a cherished therapist, counselor or teacher;
*Fear of becoming a burden to others.

**HOW CAN WE PREVENT SUICIDE?**

Remember that preventing suicide is EVERYBODY’S responsibility, as well as preventing related-suicidal behaviors or contagions. So take time to learn about the warning signs & get important information which can connect those in crisis with the proper line of help.

When warning signs appear, it is critical to quickly connect the person to supportive services. Do not leave that person alone if you suspect he/she may be suicidal. Listen openly & non-judgmentally.

For more information or services, please contact Choctaw Behavioral Health at 601-389-4150.

**TIPS FOR ASKING THE SUICIDE QUESTION**

- If in doubt, don’t wait, ask the question.
- If the person is reluctant, be persistent.
- Talk to the person alone in a private setting.
- Allow the person to talk freely.
- Give yourself plenty of time.
- Have your resources handy; phone numbers, therapist’s name & any other information that might help.

Remember: How you ask the question is less important than you asking it!

**REPORT CRIMES ANONYMOUSLY**

**Wetip**

Call 1-855-4-THE REZ (1-855-484-3739) or visit www.wetip.com

**CALL IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION ABOUT:**

- Theft
- Child Abuse
- Vandalism
- Illegal Drugs
- Bullying
- Assault
- Or any other illegal activity

You can call 24 hours a day & report your concern to us. No one will ask your name, you will remain anonymous. Your tip may lead to a REWARD, up to $1,000!

**Prevent Elder Abuse**

**Identify It! Report It! Stop It!**

**Warning Signs**

- Fear, withdrawal, depression
- Shame, anxiety, embarrassment
- Unexplained bruises or injuries
- Hesitation to talk openly
- Isolation by caregiver
- Unkiempt appearance
- Loss of self-esteem
- Unexplained disappearance of funds or valuable possessions

Recognizing the warning signs is the key to identifying and stopping an occurrence of elder abuse.

For more information on elder abuse, contact

Family Violence and Victim’s Services at 601-650-1774

**DEPARTMENT OF CHAHTA IMMI NEWS**

**CAP Hosts Workshops**

On Tuesday, Aug. 1, the Cultural Affairs Program (CAP) resumed cultural classes in the Bogue Chitto community. The staff was pleased to have Conehatta Tribal Council member Tarina Anderson as a workshop participant for making a Choctaw dress & shirt.

On Friday, Aug. 4, upon request from the Department of Early Childhood Education (DOECE), the CAP held a cultural workshop on making head bands & stickball aprons at the Pearl River Community Center.

Trudy Jimmie, Lorena Alex, Casey Bigpond, Alicia Vaughn, and Rowena Willis were the instructors as there were 70 participants.

The main objective for...continued next page
the training was to provide the DOECE staff firsthand knowledge on making stickball aprons and head bands so they can display the myriad of information on bulletin boards. In return, the information would emphasize Choctaw culture & hopefully inspire students to embrace their Choctaw culture.

**Dancers Perform At Ceremony**

The MBCI Traditional Dancers performed Choctaw social dances at the Nanih Waiya Ceremony on Tuesday, Aug. 22, at the Nanih Waiya Ceremonial Mound.

Drummers included Speedy Lewis, Dan Isaac, Roland Billy, & Ralph Isaac. Tribal employees who performed included Gina Bell, Ralph Isaac, Deanna McMillan, Trudy Jimmie, Phyllis McMillan, Casey Bigpond, Peggy Williams, Sherrill Nickey, drummer Speedy Lewis, & May McGeisy.

Thanks to Tribal Chief Phyllis J. Anderson & all supervisors who permitted their employees to perform at the ceremony.

**CAP Hosts Event For Tribal Youth**

Princess & Warrior Survival Week, an event CAP hosts annually for tribal youth, was held on Sept. 13-15 for students of the Choctaw Tribal Schools.

Students participated in activities such as miniature drum making, weaving basket designs on felt materials, sewing quilt blocks, cooking Indian taco, & making fry bread.

The CAP staff had great pleasure serving the enthusiastic & bright students.

**Workshops Conclude For FY2017**

The final cultural training activities for the fiscal year were held in the Red Water community in September. Classes included making sashes, beaded medallions, Choctaw dresses & shirts, stickball aprons & head bands, & beaded collar necklaces.

Look out for the new schedule of classes for fiscal year 2018 in future issues of the Choctaw Community News.

For more information, call (601) 663-7506.
TIMOTHY LEE FraZIER

Funeral service for Timothy Lee Frazier, 51, was held on Thursday, September 7, 2017, from the Nanih Waiya Mennonite Church. Rev. Harvey Yoder & Rev. Glenn Myers officiated.

Burial was in the church cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Frazier passed away on Sept. 3 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Roy Frazier, Sr.; sister, Margaret Todd; brother, Roy Frazier; grandparents, Lee Jim, Sr. & Lonie Cotton Jim; Fob Frazier & Lavada Sam Frazier; 3 aunts; four uncles; & 5 great-aunts.

Survivors include his mother, Bobbie Jean Frazier; sister, Margie Frazier Williams; brothers, Leroy Frazier, Jr. & Michael Frazier; 3 nieces; 4 nephews; & a host of relatives & friends.

NIKITA NICOLE WiLSON

Funeral service for Nikita Nicole Wilson, 30, was held on Friday, September 8, 2017, from Hope Indian Baptist Church. Deacon Ricky Thompson, Sr. & Rev. Henderson Williams officiated.

Burial was in the Isaac Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Wilson passed away on July 23 in Kemper County.

She enjoyed being with family & friends, being around children, fishing, watching football, playing basketball & stickball with Lady Beaver Dam.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Brenda Wilson & Brant Willis, Sr.; grandparent, Addis Wilson & R.L. Wilson, Sr.; & Edmond Willis; 2 aunts; & 3 uncles.

Survivors include her sisters, LaNesha Wilson & Brandy Willis; brother, Brantly Wilson; grandmother, Susie Willis; 2 aunts; 4 uncles; a niece, a nephew, & a host of relatives & friends.

ANITA ANDerson

Funeral service for Anita Anderson, 64, was held on Sunday, September 10, 2017, from the Conehatta Facility Building. Rev. Robert Paul Tubby & Hugh King officiated.

Burial was in the Conehatta Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Anderson passed away on Sept. 6 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

She enjoyed being with family & friends, listening to hymns, & teaching her children how to weave baskets.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Carl Wayne Anderson; parents, Ruben & Janie Shumake; sister, Jeanell Anderson; brother, Thurman Shumake; & 3 grandchildren.

Survivors include her daughters, Theresa Shoemake, Sophia Frazier, Tonya Anderson, Nina Anderson, Sunshine Anderson, & Susanna Shoemake; sons, Nathan Anderson, Manuelito Anderson, Sr., Thunder Anderson, Lightning Anderson, & John Robert Anderson; stepson, Brian Charlie; sisters, Norma Hall, Pearlie Thomas & Eleanor Chickaway; brother, Genis Shumake; an uncle; 19 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

NORMAN DOUGLAS Samuel, Sr.


Burial was in the Isleev Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Samuel passed away on Sept. 2 at the Choctaw Nation Health Care Center in Talihina, Oklahoma.

He was a U.S. Navy veteran. He was a truck driver & a transportation driver for the elders.

He enjoyed being with family, gardening, watching Oklahoma Sooners football, coaching baseball, visiting family in Oklahoma, & attending the Choctaw Nation Labor Day Festival.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Samuel; sons, Mark Samuel, N.D. Samuel & Sylvester Samuel; sisters, Elfreda Willis, Ramona Strickland & Celestine Thomas; brothers, Edgar Samuel, Vernon Willis, Everet G. Willis, & Elesten Willis, Jr.; 10 grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

RONALD KEIth Willis


Burial was in the Canaan Baptist Church Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Willis passed away on Sept. 15 at his residence.

He was a Security Officer at Pearl River Resort. He enjoyed being with family & friends, playing basketball, softball, baseball, stickball, & dominoes.

He was preceded in death by his mother, Julia Isaac Willis; a son, Jordan Keith Willis; first wife, Synthia Willis; grandparents, Byrd Dixon & Paulin Jim Isaac,
Spinks & Susie John Willis; 6 aunts; & 7 uncles.

Survivors include his wife, Andrea Thomas Willis; daughters, Joanna Wilson, Daphne Willis & Selena Willis; sons, James Willis, Ivan Willis, Dyamiko Willis, & Damian Willis; father, Martin Willis; a sister, Stephanie J. Farmer; brothers, Martin W. Willis, Sr., James B. Willis, Dan T. Willis, Terry B. Willis, Dave E. Willis, & Jerry B. Willis; 6 grandchildren; four aunts; an uncle; a great-aunt; & numerous nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**TYLER MIKO OSSI COTTON**

Funeral service for Tyler Miko Ossi Cotton, 2 month old infant, was held on Saturday, September 23, 2017, from the Pearl River Baptist Church. Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.

Burial was in the Ca-naan Baptist Church Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Infant Cotton passed away on Sept. 19 at Baton Children's Hospital in Jackson.

He was preceded in death by his grandfather, Charles Rydell Amos; great-grandparents, George & Emma Hickman, Raymond Lewis, & Lucille John; an uncle; & a great-aunt.

Survivors include his parents, Nittak-Hol-o Fichik Thomas & Charles Rydell Cotton; brothers, La'Ry denn Cotton, Rudell Cotton & Bryceotton John; grandparents, Loena Cotton, Stephanie Farmer, & Gregory Thomas; step-grandmother, Monica Thomas; step-grandfather, Frankie Farmer; great-grandmother, Lucy Lewis; 7 aunts; 11 uncles; & a host of relatives.

**BOBO THOMPSON, Sr.**

Funeral service for Bobo Thompson, Sr., 82, was held on Tuesday, September 26, 2017, from the Bogue Chitto Baptist Church. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

Burial was in the Bogue Chitto Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Thompson passed away on Sept. 22 in Holly Springs, MS.

He was a farmhand & enjoyed being with family, gardening, fishing, & repairing equipment.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Vina Mae Thompson; parents, Tommie Thompson & Bonnie Amos; son, Curtis Ray Thompson; sisters, Nora Hickman, Homen Dean Thompson & Ida Mae Brown; & brothers, Nathan Thompson & Curtis Thompson.

Survivors include his children Janie O'Kelley, Loretta Wilkins & Nannette Thompson; sons, Bobby Thompson, Jr., Paul Thompson, & David Ray Thompson; 13 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**ELON BELL**

Funeral service for Elon Bell, 66, was held on Friday, September 29, 2017, from the Standing Pine Facility Building. Pastor Curtis Willis, Sr. & Pastor Thomas Ben, Jr. officiated.

Burial was in the Standing Pine Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Bell passed away on Sept. 26 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

He was a U.S. Army veteran. He was a custodian then worked in the poultry industry. He enjoyed being with family, fishing, watching western movies, attending school programs, & cheering for the Dallas Cowboys.

He was preceded in death by his parents, G.W. Bell & Ann Frazier Bell; a son, Christopher Ryan Bell; sister, Juani-ta Chapman; half-sister, Lorene Cumberland; & brother, Elmer Bell.

Survivors include his companion Lennie Comby; a son, Kimmy Mingo; step-daughters, Nina Comby, Tarrika Comby & Keyoshia Comby; step-sons, Demari-ous Comby & Clifford Comby; sisters, Willie Mae Wilson, Rena Bell, Junie Cabrera, & Brenda Bell; brother, Levon Bell; 7 grandchildren; 13 step-grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**DEWANNA GAIL LEWIS**

Funeral service for Dewanna Gail Lewis, 53, was held on Friday, September 29, 2017, from the Bogue Chitto Facility Building. Rev. Samuel Fulton officiated.

Burial was in the Bogue Chitto Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Lewis passed away on Sept. 25 at St. Dominic's Hospital in Jackson.

She was previously employed as a child care teacher. She enjoyed being with her family, attending church, cooking outdoors, & listening to gospel music.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Tommy Cotton, Sr. & Judy Jackson Cotton; a son, Dewey Lee Lewis; & a brother, Ronald Cotton.

Survivors include three sons, Dewayne Cotton, Sr., Deon Lewis & Dustin Lewis; brothers, Gary Tubby, Donald Cotton, Tommy Cotton, Jr., Milton Chapman, & Jeffery Cotton; 16 grandchildren; an aunt, an uncle & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.
Happy 43rd Birth-
day to Eric D. Jack-
son, a.k.a. Elephant,
on Oct. 8, from your
wife Rachael...
Happy 20th Birthday to Isaiah Cotton on Oct. 16, from your mom &
stepdad, Rachael & Eric Jackson, & the rest of the family.
Happy Birthdays to Sharon G. Williams on Oct. 2, Crystal John
on Oct. 8, Yunnell Willis on Oct. 14, & Tessa Sanders on Oct. 19, from
all who love you!
Happy Birthdays to Kaylan Gibson on Nov. 8, Janie Williams on
Nov. 14, Judith Wesley on Nov. 21, & Happy 9th Birthday to Hl’ua
Tristan Bell on Nov. 29, from all who love you!
Happy 12th Birth-
day to Mr. Hayden C.
Thomas on Sept. 8,
2017 & Happy Birth-
day to our mom, Miss
Renita K. Willis on
Sept. 21, 2017. With
all the love in the
world, along with hugs &
kisses from Gibby,
Dain, Nedra & Lil
Miss Emma. We love
you Jeter & Mom!!!!!