MBCI Holds Ribbon Cutting For CVLC

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) held a ribbon cutting for the Choctaw Virtual Learning Center (CVLC) on Thursday, January 25, in the Pearl River Community, Neshoba County. The CVLC, located in the CHI Building on Industrial Road, is for students 19-24 who have dropped out of high school and never earned a diploma or GED. The Center, which currently has 30 students, allows them to “drop back-in” and work with an in-house instructor and virtual instruction services Grade Results to earn their high school diploma at their own pace.

In attendance to celebrate this wonderful occasion included Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson, several members of the Choctaw Tribal Council and 2017-2018 Choctaw Indian Princess Kassie Lann Cox, Tribal Council members Deborah Martin (Pearl River) & Kendall Wallace (Bogue Chitto), along with CVLC Administrator Gene Cliburn, CVLC staff & students, as well as Choctaw Tribal Schools staff.

“Through our partnership with the Bureau of Indian Education, Division of Education, Choctaw Central High School, the Boys & Girls Club of the MBCI, and Grade Results, we can provide educational services, professional guidance counseling and technology-based instruction in a supportive academic environment,” said Cliburn.

“Our goal is to remove any barriers to their high school completion and graduation goals. The CVLC will prepare the students to succeed as they enter college or

Tribe Participates In Dr. King Parade

The 2017-2018 Choctaw Indian Princess Kassie Lann Cox & members of the Boys & Girls Club of the MBCI represented the Tribe as they participated in the annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade in downtown Philadelphia on Saturday, Jan. 13.
Halito! It is my pleasure to wish all of you a Happy New Year and hope that 2018 brings you much success and joy.

We have a lot of wonderful things to look forward in the coming months, and I am confident that this year will be one of the most successful we’ve had in recent years.

NEW YEAR, NEW ME CHALLENGE

For those of you who have made a resolution to lose weight, the Diabetes Prevention Program can help you to meet your goals.

The program is hosting the New Year, New Me Weight Loss Challenge. This challenge will be held all year long in 2018 on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

Every month there will be a different exercise program. Some of the programs include fitness and conditioning, strength training and P90X. The mission is to “Make healthy living a lifestyle.”

The purpose is to turn a new year’s resolution into a lifestyle of physical fitness. The hope is that this challenge will encourage people to keep their new year’s resolution, get fit, and prevent diabetes and/or prevent the onset of complications of the disease.

If you would like more information or are interested in participating in this challenge, please contact Lefus Tubby at (601) 389-4385 or lefus.tubby@choctaw.org; Brendon Williams at (601) 389-4387 or brendon.williams@choctaw.org; or Willie Solomon at (601) 389-4388 or willie.solomon@choctaw.org.

I encourage those interested in healthy lifestyle changes to learn more and even participate in the New Year, New Me Weight Loss Challenge.

PEARL RIVER RESORT UPDATE

Since 2012, our Pearl River Resort has seen great growth and experienced financial success. The Resort underwent a major renovation in 2014 and 2015 and we reopened the Golden Moon. Our profits continued to increase through good leadership and financial management.

While these are great successes to celebrate over the years, we have been looking to the future because we know our competition is expanding in Alabama. That’s why we made these important updates to our properties and proposed gaming expansion.

We must continue to offer a high-end product and new experiences to keep customers, draw in new gamers and compete with a growing marketplace. And now, as predicted, we are seeing the impacts of competition.

Independent audit results, presented to the Choctaw Resort Development Board, in January show the Resort remained profitable in FY17, but it did not fully meet the profit goal that was set.

With that in mind we look to the future again. As we enter one of the resort’s busiest times of year with tax-return season, there are a number of upcoming gaming promotions, events and happenings to draw in customers and bring players to the gaming floor.

BOK HOMA CASINO BINGO ROOM OPENING

I am excited to announce the opening of a new Bingo Room at Bok Homa Casino on Thursday, January 25th. The new Bingo Room is located at the Events Center adjacent to the main casino.

Players have the opportunity to play in live time with players at the Pearl River Resort bingo room. There are video screens, board displays, electronic bingo machines, as well as paper bingo cards available to customers.

The bingo game will simulcast with the bingo room in Pearl River while a communication and verification system will be in place for players as they hit bingo. The bingo room will be able to seat a maximum of 250 players.

A formal opening event will be held in...continued next page
early spring to include a special opening session with bigger prizes and more fanfare!

Next time you visit the Bok Homa Casino check out the latest addition to our resort.

PEARL RIVER RESORT CONCERT SERIES

The resort also recently announced dates for upcoming concerts that include highly popular national acts for guests. Mark your calendar for these events:

Rascal Flatts – Saturday, March 17th;
GAPX-The Band – Saturday, April 14th.

GEYSER FALLS LAUNCHES NEW WEBSITE

As we start preparations for another busy summer season, I am happy to share that Geyser Falls Water Theme Park recently launched a new website. The new site offers guests a new and easier way to interact with our waterpark online.

Now guests can skip the lines by purchasing day and season passes online as well as buddy passes. Reservations and bookings for group sales, cabana rentals and birthday parties are also available.

The website showcases the many food and dining options available at the park, as well as the numerous exciting rides and attractions offered during the season. Directions and hours are listed as well as any special promotions.

I look forward to an active summer and I know this new website will be beneficial to our valued guests. Visit the new website online at www.geyserfalls.com

CHOCTAW VIRTUAL LEARNING CENTER

On Thursday, January 25th, we officially celebrated the opening of the Choctaw Virtual Learning Center (CVLC). This center is a wonderful asset to our community and young people. I have great hopes in the success of the center and the opportunities it will provide to our tribal youth.

The center offers Choctaw students ages 16-23 many educational paths. For those students that have dropped-out of high school and never earned a diploma or GED, the center is a place for them to “drop back-in” and work with an in-house instructor and virtual instructional services to earn their high school diploma at their own pace.

Online classes and tutoring are available to students at the center and beyond. Students also may pursue college courses and career-readiness certifications.

The center is 20% classroom-based and 80% online-based with live, real-time student/teacher interaction and intensive instructional support provided by licensed teachers in Math and English, along with additional certified teachers serving as one-on-one tutors, as provided by the Boys and Girls Clubs of MBCI grant.

Students at the center also receive breakfast and lunch just like a traditional school setting.

The center is located in the CHI Building on Industrial Road. Currently, the center has 30 students with 3 already graduating and earning their diploma to walk in this year’s CCHS Commencement Ceremony. Congratulations to those students and we are so proud of your accomplishments!

To learn more about the Choctaw Virtual Learning Center, call (601) 663-7926 or email caylin.nickey@choctaw.org.

CCHS WINTER SPORTS UPDATE

Our soccer teams concluded their seasons with division titles and berths in the state playoffs. The Lady Warriors and Warriors concluded with overall 13-2 and 11-4 records respectively.

The basketball teams are angling for shots at state championships. They concluded the regular season as division champions and claimed number one seeds in the division tournament hosted by CCHS. As they head into the state playoffs,....see LETTER, pg. 4
From the CHC Business Office

Did you know that if you are eligible for Purchased/Referred Care (PRC Referrals), you are required to notify the PRC program for emergency room visits at other hospitals/clinics?

The PRC program must be notified of emergent care to other hospitals/clinics within 72 hours (3 days) of the emergency room visit or admission. The patient, provider, hospital, or someone on behalf of the patient must contact the PRC. The notification is extended to 30 days for the elderly (age 65+) and the disabled.

Business Office Hours/Phone Number:
Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM
601-389-4060

When the Business Office is closed (after 5:00 p.m., weekends & holidays), please leave a message on the Business Office voicemail. We ask that you leave a clear message that include:
- Patient’s full name
- Date of birth
- Name of emergency room facility
- Date of service or admission
- Reason for emergency
- Working phone number

The Business Office will call you the next business day following your notification. It is extremely important to leave a working phone number to contact you to get additional information.

Please note the 72-hour notification does not guarantee approval of payment. Case Management and/or the PRC Committee will review on a case-by-case basis and determine approval of payment, based on factors such as a life-threatening emergency room visit or if services were not available at Choctaw Health Center. Any services that could have been provided at Choctaw Health Center, such as a common cold or flu, will not be approved for payment.

If you have more questions regarding the PRC 72-Hour notification requirement, do not hesitate to contact the Business Office.

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CCHS SOFTBALL FIELD UPDATE

The CCHS softball field project has been completed, and I am eagerly looking forward to seeing our Lady Warriors softball team showcasing their skills on the field during this upcoming fast pitch season.

Our fans and visitors will get to enjoy the great new amenities, such as the new stadium bleachers and concession stand.

The first home game is scheduled for Thursday, March 22 against Newton County. We hope you will join us and experience the new state-of-the-art softball field.

TUSHKA SUBDIVISION IN CONEHATTA

As part of my Housing Plan introduced in 2015, I am pleased to share that my administration has provided $15.5 Million to the housing project fund to purchase land, set-up important infrastructure like water, electricity and roads and build 100 new homes on the reservation managed by the Choctaw Land, Housing and Mortgage Program.

On Thursday, January 25th, a ribbon cutting was held for a new neighborhood in the Conehatta Community called Tushka. The neighborhood features 14 new family homes - all 4 bedrooms, 2 baths.

If you are in the market for a new home or interested in learning more, I encourage you to call the Choctaw Land, Housing and Mortgage Program at 601-656-0056.

BOGUE CHITTO SOFTBALL FIELD

Another recent update we have made in our communities is in Bogue Chitto at the community softball field.

We have used budgeted community improvement funds requested by former council representative Ronnie Henry and current council members Davita McClelland and Kendall Wallace to provide new fences around the current fields, new dirt for the infield and replacement dugouts and press box.

I know these updates will be well received in the community.

WETLANDS DISCOVERY ZONE IN CONEHATTA

Also in Conehatta, we are happy to celebrate a ribbon cutting for the Wetlands Discovery Zone.

The Discovery Zone features boardwalks over wetlands and nature trails to highlight our environment and to teach school age children the cultural connections between our people, the forest and the wetlands.

With community improvement funds requested by former Conehatta council representative Troy Chickaway and our current Vice-Chief Hilda Nickley, we were able to provide new pumps to...continued next page
maintain water levels, new signage, rebuild boardwalks, clean up trails and add a new boardwalk to a beaver dam.

I know school children and teachers will enjoy this facility as a place of learning and wonder. Thank you to those that supported this project for the benefit of the Conehatta community and our tribal members.

NASA TOURNAMENT

The annual NASA basketball tournament was held on January 19 and 20, 2018, in Irving, NY, hosted by the Seneca Nation of Indians.

There were Adults (18 years and older) and Legends (40 years and older) in men’s and women’s categories. As usual, our Tribe was well-represented, with several teams participating.

I congratulate all of the winners and commend the recreation staffs from the various tribes who work hard to organize and host these NASA and NAYO tournaments throughout the year.

CLOSING

I am looking forward to seeing you at upcoming ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings as we celebrate new beginnings throughout the year.

I also will host Community Field Days in each community, and I am excited to share with you the great progress that is taking place on the Reservation.

Be on the lookout for the field days schedule on our Tribal website and Facebook page and in the next issue of the Choctaw Community News.

Also, we will distribute flyers house-to-house in each community a few days before each event.

Thank you for all of the prayers and encouragement you have offered to me in years past, and I hope you will continue to do the same in 2018.

I am proud and honored to serve as your Tribal Chief, and I hope we will continue to stand together and make every effort to create a brighter future for our Choctaw people.

Many Blessings,

Phyllis J. Anderson
Tribal Chief

DOECE News

Halito from the Early Childhood Program. The children all enjoyed the wonder & joys of Christmas this past December!

Each center held Christmas programs where children sang Christmas songs & had lunch with their parents. Christmas activities are always a thrill for the children.

If you have a child ages 8 weeks to 5 years, please consider enrolling in our program. Each center has different programs for different ages. Head Start & Early Head Start offers their services for free. The Child Care programs charge a fee on a sliding scale based on family income.

Even if a center does not have vacancies, please fill out an application to be placed on the wait list for when a vacancy does occur. We welcome the opportunity to serve your child & family in our program. Children with disabilities & homeless children are given priority.

The Head Start Program provides free transportation to & from the center every day. Please consider us for your child care needs. We consider our program to be the first step on the road to success in school!

For more information, visit your local center, or contact the main office at 601-650-1680. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
this year’s competition. They included: Conehatta’s Dynamic Team of Conehatta Elementary School; Team H2O of Pearl River Elementary School; Oka Bahllith of Tucker Elementary School; LEGO Warriors of Pearl River Elementary School; Young Warriors of Pearl River Elementary School; Tushka Oka of Choctaw Central Middle School; Bogue Chitto Water Workers of Bogue Chitto Elementary School; Standing Pine Water Savers of Standing Pine Elementary School; and Water Raptors of Red Water Elementary School.

Local 2018 tournament awards were presented at the conclusion of the three robot performance rounds.

The FLL Core Values Award was presented to the Bogue Chitto Water Workers of Bogue Chitto Elementary. This award recognizes a team that demonstrates good potential to solve the problem researched. This award recognizes a team that effectively communicated the problem and their proposed solution to both judges and other potential supporters.

The Robot Design Award was presented to the Young Warriors of Pearl River Elementary. This award recognizes a team that designs a mechanically sound robot that is durable, efficient and highly capable of performing challenge missions. The team utilizes outstanding programming principles, including clear, concise and reusable code that allows their robot to perform challenge missions autonomously and consistently. Solid engineering principles and a well-developed strategy is used to design and build an innovative, high performing robot.

The Robot Performance Award was presented to the LEGO Warriors of Pearl River Elementary. This award is presented to the team that utilizes diverse resources to formulate an in depth and comprehensive understanding of the problem they identified. The team’s solution is exceptionally well considered and creative, with good potential to solve the problem researched.
Award was presented to Tushka Oka of Choctaw Central Middle School. This award recognizes a team that scores the most points during the Robot Game. Teams have a chance to compete in at least three 2.5 minute matches and their highest score counts.

The Champion’s Award was presented to the Water Raptors of Red Water Elementary. This award recognizes a team that embodies the FIRST LEGO League experience, by fully embracing the CORE Values while achieving excellence and innovation in both the Robot Game and Project.

The Water Raptors and LEGO Warriors represented the Choctaw Tribal Schools at the Mississippi FIRST LEGO League Championship on February 10 at Mississippi College’s A.E. Wood Coliseum in Clinton.

Cambree York served as tournament emcee. Wes Wallace and Matthew Bell served as tournament referees.

Serving as judges were Scottie Wallace and Ty Keams (Project Presentation), Bernita Reynolds and Autumn McMillan (Core Values), and Elray King and Pat O’Neil (Robot Design).

Special thanks to volunteers for donating their time, energies and talents to the Choctaw Tribal Schools’ FLL Tournament, and to all coaches and technical mentors for their countless hours spent on teaching, facilitating and encouraging students in this program. Their contributions will have a lasting impact on the “Engineers of Tomorrow.”

First Lady Visits Students
First Lady of Mississippi Deborah Bryant visited Standing Pine Elementary School students in grades second through fourth on Friday, January 19, as part of her “Read Across Mississippi” program. Since 2014, Mrs. Bryant has traveled the entire state to read to students in a school in all 82 counties to promote literacy and bring attention to reading disabilities. She also gave a presentation about herself, her family and the work she and her husband, Governor Phil Bryant, do for all Mississippians.

LEFT, MBCI Vice Chief Hilda Nickey (left) presents a token of appreciation to First Lady of Mississippi Deborah Bryant for her visit. RIGHT, Mrs. Bryant hugs student Yazmine Hickman. Yazmine’s mother made the traditional basket that was presented to Mrs. Bryant.

PRES Hosts 3rd Annual Literacy Night
Pearl River Elementary School hosted their 3rd Annual Family Literacy Night on Monday, January 8. Students & their families participated in fun activities to promote literacy & the joys of reading. The gymnasium was full of fun and challenging games such as a Spelling Bee, Boggle, Scrabble, Bingo, & a bake walk. All activities were planned by a literacy committee. Inside the cafeteria, students displayed storyboards of their favorite stories & storytellers presented live renditions of Choctaw tales. Several teachers also put a new spin on storybooks the students have read as they performed entertaining literacy raps. Refreshments were served for those in attendance. With great support from the community, the PRES Literacy Committee is already looking forward to next year’s event.

Tutors Helping Students Prepare for Assessments At RWES
Tutors at Red Water Elementary School (RWES) are having a great year working with students to help them achieve success in the classroom. Through the Ready & iReady programs, tutors are preparing students for their end-of-the-year assessments. We are extremely proud of the students’ hard work & improvements observed on a daily basis. We encourage parents to contact us at RWES if we can be of further assistance.
CCMS Claims Tourney Titles

The Choctaw Central Middle School Lady Warriors and Warriors claimed the 2018 Choctaw Tribal Schools 7th-8th grade basketball championships on Friday, January 26 at the Choctaw Central High School Gymnasium.

The Lady Warriors defeated the Conehatta Elementary Lady ChocTaws 71-42 for the girls championship. The Warriors defeated the Tucker Elementary Braves 63-30 for the boys title.

The Lady Warriors took a 16-9 lead in the first quarter and ended the first half with a 16-11 advantage for a 32-21 halftime lead over the Lady ChocTaws.

The Lady Warriors went on a 22-7 run in the third for a 54-28 lead. In the final quarter, Choctaw Central added to their lead with a 17-14 advantage for a 71-42 win.

“It’s a great ending to a good season. The kids worked hard and this is what they live for. It’s a tribal tournament and everybody plays for pride,” said Lady Warriors coach Elyse Bowling.

“Choctaw Central got a real good squad. Thought our girls gave a hard effort. Sometimes you run up on a David and Goliath situation and tonight we were David and they were Goliath. They got a great team and we knew that. I’m proud of my girls,” said Smith.

Choctaw Central’s Kyla Farmer was named Most Outstanding Player of the game. Named to the Girls All-Tournament Team were Breely Wilson (Red Water Elementary), Kacy Nickey (Tucker Elementary), Neera Bell (Bogue Chitto Elementary), Remini Nickey (Conehatta Elementary), and LeLeia McMillan (Choctaw Central).

In the boys’ final, the Warriors went on a 20-6 run over the Braves in the opening quarter. They continued with a 13-8 advantage to close out the first quarter.

“Choctaw Central got a real good squad. Thought our girls gave a hard effort. Sometimes you run up on a David and Goliath situation and tonight we were David and they were Goliath. They got a great team and we knew that. I’m proud of my girls,” said Smith.

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...........see TOURNEY, pg. 13

CCHS 20+ Club Recognized

Choctaw Central High School’s 20+ Club, an organization with membership reserved for students scoring 20 or above on the ACT, recognized the 2017-2018 members for their academic achievement. The club also encourages students to strive for excellence on the ACT. Pictured, front row from left, are Reyes Willis, India Samuel, Kyarrah Grant, Jaysari Mitch, Kyannah Grant, CCHS Principal Dr. Fredrick Hickmon, counselor Claire Threatt, Mahli Bell, Kravon Willis; back row, Jayshun Thomas, Antonio Perez, Ethan King, Cobi John, Mahali Henry, Myric Anderson, East Central Community College representative Sherrell Brown, & Narron Cotton. Not pictured are Kacy Bell, Julius Billy, Skylar Comans, Brayton Jim, Asa Jimmie, Tyus Whitecrow, Jamion “Kiezer” Johnson, & Hunter Smith.

Bowling Seniors Honored

Choctaw Central High School honored seniors in the bowling program. Team members include, kneeling, Hannah Anderson; middle row from left, Mahali Henry, Autumn Lewis, Katelyn Shoemake, Mahli Bell, Brandon Williams, OTC student intern Breanna Isaac; back row, Malia Burnside, CCHS Principal Dr. Frederick Hickmon, Daniel Jordan, & OTC Administrator & coach Liddia Hughes.
Tribe Recognized During State Address
Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant recognized the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) & Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson during his State-of-the-State address in January.

IHS-Nashville Area Honors Officials, CHC Employees
Tribal leaders & health care employees were recognized during the Indian Health Services–Nashville Area Honor Awards Ceremony on Jan. 12. Chief Phyliss J. Anderson was recipient of the Nashville Area Director’s Award for Excellence. Choctaw Health Center (CHC) employees Laura Dees, Beverly Terry, Philip J. Evans, D.M.D., Gregory Griffin, & Matthew Bell were also honored for their service.

15th FLL Tourney held at PRES
The Choctaw Tribal Schools held the 15th Annual FIRST LEGO® League (FLL) Tournament on Saturday, Jan. 21 at the Pearl River Elementary School Gymnasium in Choctaw. Nearly 100 students participated.

CCMS Claims CTS Titles
The Choctaw Central Middle School Lady Warriors & Warriors claimed the Choctaw Tribal Schools’ annual basketball tournament championships on Thursday, Jan. 26 at the Bogue Chitto Community Gymnasium. The Lady Warriors defeated the Red Water Elementary Lady Braves 50-31 & the Warriors defeated the Red Water Braves 46-30.

Tribal Council Approves Red Water Casino Resolution
The Choctaw Tribal Council voted 9-7 to adopt Resolution CHO 17-033, “a Resolution to Expand Gaming & Make Resort Area Designation in the Red Water Community, Choctaw Indian Reservation,” during a special call meeting on Friday, Jan. 27. The 35,800 square-foot casino will be built in Leake County, Miss. The project’s estimated time frame is 12 months.

Wesley Wins District Spelling Bee
Jaeden Wesley, seventh grader at Red Water Elementary School, was the grand champion speller at the 23rd Annual Choctaw Tribal Schools District-Wide Spelling Bee on Feb. 3 at the Conehatta Elementary School Gymnasium.

Tribe Breaks Ground For PRES Safe Room
The MBCI held a groundbreaking ceremony for Phase II of the $1.6 million Pearl River Elementary School (PRES) Safe Room Project on Feb. 14, in Choctaw.

Tribe Pays Off $10 Million CHC Loan
The MBCI paid off the remaining balance on a 10-year loan taken out to help finance construction costs of the new Choctaw Health Center. Signed on March 11, 2015, the 10-year, $10 million loan was paid off in only 23 months.

Tribe Mourns Passing of Director Willis
MBCI Department of Public Safety Director Wendell Willis passed away on Sunday, Feb. 26. He was an integral part of MBCI Public Safety for 21 years.

Warriors Exit State Tourney
The Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) Warriors (12-17) were defeated by Holly Springs 80-54 in the quarterfinals of the MHSAA Class 3A Boys State Basketball Tournament on Friday, March 3 in Jackson.

Lady Warriors Class 3A State Basketball Champs
The CCHS Lady Warriors defeated Amanda Elzy 75-42 to claim the MHSAA Class 3A Girls State Basketball Tournament championship March 11 in Jackson.

Choctaw Central Unified Warriors Special Olympics
The CCHS Warriors Special Olympic athletes brought home another championship from the Special Olympics/Unified State Competition on Saturday, March 11 in Jackson.

CCHS Hosts Author’s Night
Members of CCHS’s senior class showcased their year-long writing project as part of Author’s Night on Monday, April 10 in the CCHS library. Seniors read their selections of stories and poems to the audience as they also displayed personal illustrations.

Child Abuse Prevention Activities Held in Choctaw
The MBCI Department of Family & Community Services hosted a child abuse prevention event on Wednesday, April 12 at the Pearl River Recreational Field in Choctaw. Children & teachers from the Department of Early Childhood Education programs participated in activities in observance of April being National Child Abuse Prevention Month.
Choctaw Transit Hosts 2017 Roadeo
The Mississippi Public Transit Association, along with the Mississippi Department of Transportation’s Public Transit Division, co-sponsored their annual Roadeo in Choctaw on April 21-22. It was the 17th consecutive year the Roadeo was hosted by Choctaw Transit.

Lady Warriors South State Champs
The 3A South State champions Choctaw Central Lady Warriors (20-9) were swept by Mooreville in the Mississippi High School Activities Association’s Class 3A state fast-pitch softball championship series at Freedom Ridge Park in Ridgeland.

CCHS Holds Graduation Ceremony
CCHS hosted the Class of 2017 commencement ceremony on Tuesday, May 23 at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw. Ninety-five seniors successfully completed their high school education requirements. Valedictorian & STAR Student honors went to Searra Wilson & Diajah York was named Salutatorian.

Lady Warriors Named Team of the Year
The 2016-2017 CCHS Lady Warriors basketball team was named #MSPreps Team of the Year during the Clarion-Ledger’s sports awards banquet May 25 in Jackson.

Wreath Laying Ceremony Held At Veterans Memorial
A wreath laying ceremony commemorating Memorial Day was observed at the Choctaw Veterans Memorial. Veterans, families of veterans & MBCI officials paid tribute to U.S. military personnel who served our nation & remembered those that made the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

Official Election Results Released
The MBCI Tribal Election Committee released official results of the June 13 Tribal elections for nine seats on the Choctaw Tribal Council. Elected were Roderick Bell (Bogue Chitto), Kendall Wallace (Bogue Chitto), Tarina K. Anderson (Conehatta), Hilda Nickey (Conehatta), Christopher Eaves (Crystal Ridge), Deborah Martin (Pearl River), Barry McMillan (Pearl River), Loriann Denson Ahshapanek (Standing Pine), & Dorothy Wilson (Tucker).

CCPC Hosts Leadership Conference
The Choctaw Community Planning Coalition (CCPC), along with Choctaw Behavioral Health, hosted the 12th Annual Youth Leadership Conference at Tucker Elementary School on June 21-22. The conference was designed to provide information on social issues concerning youth ages 11-18.

Teams Participate In Unity Run/Walk
Players representing Choctaw stickball teams participating in this year’s World Series Stickball tournament took part in the 11th Annual Unity Walk/Run on Saturday, June 24. The event was sponsored by the Special Diabetes Program for Indians & Diabetes Prevention Program.

Beaver Dam Wins Stickball Gold
The Beaver Dam youth stickball team (ages 9-12) claimed gold medals in the State Games of Mississippi stickball tournament over Pearl River 4-3 at Warrior Stadium in Choctaw on June 24. Bok Cito claimed bronze medals with a 4-3 win over Koni Hata Osi in the consolation game.

Geyser Falls Donates To Wounded Warrior Project
Geyser Falls Water Theme Park celebrated its 15th anniversary with a special discount that benefitted disabled veterans across the country. On Tuesday, July 4, Geyser Falls park admission was only $17, with a portion of the proceeds donated to the Wounded Warrior Project.

Tribal Officials Sworn-In
Elected tribal officials were officially sworn-in during a regular Tribal Council meeting on Tuesday, July 11. Also during the meeting, Hilda Nickey was selected as Vice Chief, Richard Isaac as Secretary/Treasurer, & Berdie Steve as Committee Systems Chair.

68th Annual Choctaw Indian Fair
During the 68th Annual Choctaw Indian Fair on July 12-15, Kassie Lann Cox of the Red Water Community was crowned the 2017-2018 Choctaw Indian Princess. Also crowned were World Series Stickball champions in their respective divisions: Koni Hata (mens); Koni Hata Ohoya (womens); Bok Cito (35-over mens); Koni Hata Himtah (Tulli Okchi Ishko, 14-17); & Pearl River (Pushmataha, 10-13). Iron Warrior winners were Eric Pinto (men’s division) & Miranda Stamper (women’s division). Rez Run winners were Joseph Chebet & Meggan Franks (10k), Lucy Hardy & Dustin Mettler (5k). Tucker Development Club placed first in the Community Booth Competition.

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Tribe Commemorates Nanih Waiya Day
The MBCI hosted activities at the Nanih Waiya Ceremonial Mound in Winston County on Tuesday, Aug. 22, to commemorate the restoration of the Nanih Waiya Mound & Cave sites back to the Tribe. That evening, the Nanih Waiya Day All-Star Stick-ball Games were played at Warrior Stadium. In the women’s contest, Fichik Cito Ohoyo (Big Star) defeated Fichik Malata Ohoyo (Shining Star) 7-5. In the men’s contest, Fichik Cito defeated Fichik Malata 10-9.

Adult Education Hosts Graduation Ceremony
The Choctaw Adult Education Program hosted the 2016-2017 GED Commencement Ceremony on Thursday, Aug. 24 at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw.

CCHS Receives Laura Bush Foundation Grant
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.

Bell Among ‘40 Under 40’ Award Recipients
Tribal member Lanisha Bell was honored on Sept. 6 as one of the recipients of the 2017 National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development’s “Native American 40 Under 40” award.

New Safe Room Opens At PRES
The MBCI 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 & has the capacity to shelter 900 people, which includes PRES students, teachers, staff, & community members.

Activities, Fun Day In Choctaw
A day of fun & activities for the whole family was held on Saturday, Sept. 16 in Choctaw. The Boys & Girls Club of the MBCI hosted a Day for Kids event at the Pearl River Amphitheater. At Lake Pushmataha, the Choctaw Wildlife & Parks Department and MSU Extension Services hosted the Choctaw Wildlife Jamboree.

Jackson, Choctaw Fresh Produce Honored
On September 18-22, the MBCI Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program sponsored Disability Awareness Week activities to raise awareness of disability issues & celebrate successes of workers with disabilities. The program honored an employer that has made a significant impact on the employment of qualified individuals who experience disabilities & an individual who experiences a disability & has made a significant personal success in employment. This year’s recipients, Michael Jackson, Sr. as Employee of the Year & Choctaw Fresh Produce as Employer of the Year, were honored on Wednesday, Sept. 20.

Tribe Breaks Ground For New Red Water Clinic
The MBCI held a ground breaking ceremony for the new Red Water community health clinic on Thursday, Sept. 28. Construction on the new 10,860-square-foot Red Water community health clinic is expected to be completed in the fall of 2018.

Families Remember Homicide Victims
The MBCI Family Violence & Victim’s Services hosted an 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.

MBCI Economic Development Website Now Online
The MBCI Office of Economic Development launched a new website (www.MsChoctawsbizopps.com) focused on attracting & recruiting new business opportunities for the MBCI.

CCHS Solar Car Team Places 2nd In World Solar Challenge
The CCHS Solar Car Team placed second in their division at the Bridgestone World Solar Challenge in Australia October 8-15. The team, driving their vehicle Tushka Hashi III (Sun Warrior), traveled 1,800 miles across Australia. Out of nearly 40 entries comprised of colleges & universities from over 30 countries, CCHS (the only Native American team) was one of only two high schools participating & one of four teams representing the U.S.

Taylor Sworn In As Criminal Court Judge
Tribal member Anthony Drew Taylor was confirmed as a judge for the Choctaw Tribal

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Criminal Court during a regular-call Tribal Council meeting on Tuesday, Oct. 10. He was sworn into the judiciary after the meeting.

Exceptional Education Hosts Dyslexia Awareness Event
The Choctaw Tribal Schools’ Exceptional Education Department’s Dyslexia Therapy Program hosted a Dyslexia Awareness Night at the Golden Moon VIP Room on Tuesday, Oct. 17 in Choctaw. Students diagnosed with dyslexia & their parents were invited to learn more about strategies to help them be more successful in school & make the community more aware of what dyslexia is.

Resort Associates Donate For Breast Cancer Awareness
In honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Pearl River Resort associates showed their support by donating $12,125. Each year, the Resort gives its associates an opportunity to get involved with “Paint the Promenade Pink” & “Buttons for the Cause.” All proceeds benefitted the American Cancer Society.

DOECE Hosts Green Corn Festival
The annual Green Corn Festival was held on Friday, Oct. 27, at the Bogue Chitto Elementary School Amphitheater. This year’s festival was dedicated to Bogue Chitto Center Director Lola Jackson, who is retiring after 42 years of service.

Lady Warriors Win 3A Cross Country Title
The CCHS Lady Warriors Cross Country Team captured their third Class 3A state title in five years during the MHSAA State Cross Country Championships on Monday, Nov. 6 in Clinton. The Warriors finished third overall in Class 3A.

Veterans Honored During Parade
The MBCI honored those who served in our nation’s military during the MBCI Veterans Day Parade on Thursday, Nov. 9 in Choctaw. This year’s theme was “Let Freedom Ring: Operation Enduring Freedom & Operation Iraqi Freedom.”

Tribe Hosts Thanksgiving Feasts
The MBCI hosted a Thanksgiving Feast for Tribal members in the Henning, TN community on Sunday, Nov. 5 at the Multi-Purpose Facility Building. On Tuesday, Nov. 14, Tribal members, guests & dignitaries gathered in the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw for the Reservation-Wide Thanksgiving Feast.

Voters Reject Resolution CHO 17-033
A proposed $25 million casino project in the Red Water Community of Leake County was rejected by members of the MBCI as a result of a special reservation-wide referendum vote on Thursday, Nov. 16. The final tally was 1,506 No - 710 Yes, which included absentee ballots, according to official results released by the Tribal Election Committee on Nov. 17. The outcome of the referendum reversed Resolution CHO 17-033.

Tribe, VA Signs MOU
The MBCI & the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) held a ceremonial signing on Thursday, Nov. 30, of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that will make the process of applying for a VA home loan easier for eligible Native American Veterans, active-duty military & their spouses on Federal trust land. The event was held at the Golden Moon Hotel & Casino VIP Room in Choctaw.

Holiday Fun At Cookies & Cocoa
Cookies & Cocoa with Santa Claus & Choctaw Indian Princess Kassie Cox was held on Thursday, Dec. 7 at the Pearl River Community Center. The event included activities for children, storytelling, & pictures with Santa & the princess. Several organizations were recognized for their service to Tribal members & were recipients of donations.

Bok Homa Casino Celebrates 7th Anniversary
Bok Homa Casino celebrated its seventh year anniversary on Wednesday, Dec. 20. Guests celebrated with cake, hors d’oeuvres, live entertainment, & free t-shirts.

Tribe Hosts Christmas Luncheon For Employees
The MBCI hosted its annual Tribal Government Christmas Luncheon on Thursday, Dec. 21 in the Pearl River Community Gymnasium. Chief Anderson offered her appreciation to all employees for the Tribe’s success in 2017. Delilah Gibson was the overall winner of the 16th Annual Reservation-Wide Christmas Decoration Contest. Kevin Payne of the Office of the Attorney General was announced the 2017 Employee of the Year. Wanda Davidson, Acting Director of the Housing and Loan Program, was named honorable mention.
Soccer Seniors Honored
Choctaw Central High School honored seniors in the soccer program during a recognition ceremony during intermission of the Choctaw Central-Mississippi School for Mathematics & Science contests on Tuesday, January 23. ABOVE, Team members are pictured with seniors Isaiah Billy (left) and Dregen Joe (right). RIGHT, From left are seniors Lauren Ben, Jayna Ben, Brekaitya Ray, & manager Hannah Anderson.

TOURNEY ...................................................... continued from page eight

half with a 33-14 lead.
Choctaw Central went on a 16-5 run in the third for a 49-19 lead. The Warriors added to their lead in the fourth quarter with a 14-11 advantage for a 63-30 victory.

“We went out there with the same plan, just execute and we had to make sure to do that and limit our turnovers,” said Warriors coach Jimmy Tangle. “I told them we’re going out there and we’re giving it all we got and leaving it on the court. That’s how we came out with the win.”

Tucker coach John Miller commended his team’s effort in making it to the championship game.

“Throughout the season we fought and battled in every game. A lot of people didn’t expect us to make it here, but our team believed we would. I’m proud of our boys and the effort they gave us. Choctaw Central has a good, tough team and you have to give it to them.”

Choctaw Central’s Jahiem Nash was named Most Outstanding Player of the game.

Named to the Boys All-Tournament Team were Dylan Stephens (Red Water Elementary), Markeleus Mingo (Bogue Chitto Elementary), Dresen Jimmie (Conehatta Elementary), Haden Jones (Tucker Elementary) and Eli Joe (Choctaw Central).

Pictured above are members of the Choctaw Tribal Schools All-Tournament Teams & Most Outstanding Players of the games.
Submitted by Department of Family & Community Services, Family Violence & Victim’s Services

One-in-three seventh grade students report being a victim of dating violence, according to the Robert Wood Foundation. The startling reality is that almost half (44% of students) have been in an abusive relationship by the time they graduate from college.

Dating violence among our young people is a rapidly growing problem. Furthermore, teenagers use technology more & more each day. Unfortunately, this means their abusive girlfriend/boyfriend does as well. Victims are harassed through texts, emails, social media, & video chats. A study by MTV & AP showed that 10% of the abusers demanded that the teen victims hand over their passwords.

Yes. It is happening. Teen Dating Violence (TDV) is real. What are the warning signs for parents, school administrators, & victims?

**For Parents:** Look for changes in behavior such as being more anxious or sad? Has your teen stopped participating in extracurricular activities? Are the friends of your teen no longer coming around?

**For School Administrators:** Does the couple argue loudly in the hallway? Does a student try to change his/her schedule to avoid the abuser? Are the student’s grades falling? Does the abuser seem to control or firmly hold on to the victim when you see them together?

**For the Victim:** Does your boyfriend/ girlfriend put you down? Does he/she blame you for everything? Does he/she hit or shove you, or throw things at you? Does he/she threaten to reveal private things about you on social media?

Yes, TDV is real & it is happening. As parents, teachers, friends, & victims, we need to speak up to help put a stop to TDV.

Please contact Family Violence & Victim’s Services for further information at 601-650-1774.

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**Teen Dating Violence: Is It Real?**

**Submitted by** Department of Family & Community Services, Family Violence & Victim’s Services

Teen Dating Violence: Is It Real?

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**Risk Factors for Teen Dating Violence**

**Submitted by** Department of Family & Community Services, Family Violence & Victim’s Services

Teenagers are not immune to violence. Research in 2016 by the National Centers for Disease Control suggested that 22% of women & 15% of men first experienced some form of violence from a dating partner between the ages of 11-17.

There are some identified factors that might put your teenager at risk for being abused or becoming an abusive partner:

1. **A belief that dating violence is acceptable.**

   If a teenager is already seeing domestic violence within his or her own home, then perhaps accepting that violence will be done to him/her in a relationship is easy.

2. **Conflict with partner.** Teenagers ages 11-17 may not have developed a firm, healthy sense of handling conflict in their lives. Therefore, conflict with a dating partner might very well lead to violent behaviors.

3. **Substance abuse.** Anytime a substance is introduced into a situation, there will be some sort of altered state of thinking, which could contribute to violent behavior or accepting that “the person only hurt me because he/she was drinking,” which is not acceptable.

4. **Depression, anxiety & other trauma symptoms.** There may already be some issues within the teenager – either from being a victim at home, or from victimizing someone else. This could be causing mental health issues, which sometimes affect how the person responds to dating issues.

5. **Having a friend involved in dating violence.** Teenagers talk & listen to friends. If they see other friends involved already in dating violence, the teens will frequently think dating violence is okay. It might be the thinking that “everyone’s doing this, & it’s no big deal.”

   TDV is a big deal. It can be very dangerous & life threatening.

Our teenagers deserve a bright future. If you or someone you know needs our help, please call Family Violence & Victim’s Services at 601-650-1774.

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**REPORT CRIMES ANONYMOUSLY**

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!


**CFS Hosts Special Christmas For Children**

Submitted by Albert Smith, Children & Family Services

Children and Family Services (CFS) once again thanks the Pearl River Resort for their annual commitment to the CFS program during the Christmas period. In particular, we wanted to mention Dominique Lewis and the staff from the Public Relations/Marketing Department and others for having an Angel Tree which benefitted all of the foster children over the Christmas period. We are grateful to have them support our program and the children who are in our care and custody.

We could not do it without your commitment and support. We thank you once again for making Christmas special for our foster children.

In addition, we would like to give big thanks to Ms. Patricia Battle from Choctaw Mission who was kind enough to provide children in our care and others with gifts and a gathering in late December.

We sincerely appreciate the kindness and contribution from Ms. Battle and her congregation during a festive time, which may also be a difficult time for some people.

The annual Toys For Chahta Alla Osi Basketball Tournament held in Pearl River during December. Although the tournament was disrupted by some white fluffy stuff, it was still very successful and well attended. A big thank you to all those who donated to the CFS program.

We would like to mention Kelby Anderson, Kevin Grisham and Valerie Thomas from the Choctaw Police Department and others for their efforts in making this event successful once again. We would also like to thank Tribal Security, CFS Hosts Special Christmas For Children

CTEOHP Focuses On Cultural History

By Melford Farve, Staff Writer

Life experiences, as told by Tribal elders, can help one see a way of life and perspective from another time. In contrast to this present world of technology and innovations, an elder’s life as a youth was of a simpler time, living a life of family and traditions in a constantly changing world.

Today’s younger generation cannot fathom ideas such as living in wood frame houses with no indoor plumbing, working as sharecroppers to make ends meet, and living off the land to eat.

The Department of Chahta Immi’s Special Projects/Media Program is bringing to light the lifeways of Choctaw elders to today’s young minds and interested individuals through an innovative project called the Choctaw Tribal Elders Oral History Project (CTEOHP).

The scope of this project is to capture oral histories of Tribal elders born and raised in Mississippi Choctaw communities from the 1930s-1960s, and use the collected knowledge to help Choctaw youth learn more about the culture and language.

Eddie Johnson, Special Projects/Media Coordinator, explains how the project initiated.

“The whole purpose was to bring cultural education resource material to Tribal members, especially the young people. Our elders are our best resource because they experienced and lived a more traditional lifestyle, and we have an opportunity for them to tell their story.”

There were three main objectives in the project. The first was to recruit and record Tribal elders from the Choctaw communities. From spring 2016 to fall 2017, the CTEOHP staff conducted interviews on video with several elders they recruited. The videos were then utilized to develop scripts for a series of short features based on cultural topics.

The second part of the project included researching and gathering copies of cultural and historical material. While the elders were being recorded, members of the CTEOHP team gathered material, artifacts and old photos from Choctaw community members. They also delved into public collections to acquire photos and documents pertaining to Choctaw culture and history.

The third objective involved developing and disseminating the recorded and gathered information.

..see CTEOHP, pg. 20
Ornament Beading Classes

The Cultural Affairs Program (CAP) held ornament beading classes in the communities of Pearl River, Bogue Chitto, Standing Pine, & Red Water during December.

The classes are usually in great demand before the Christmas holiday & attendance was well. Tribal Chief Phyliss J. Anderson, a proud supporter of the CAP, visited the class in Red Water.

It was a pleasure for the staff to serve the public at the beading class in Red Water. There were participants from Minnesota & Alabama as they all completed their ornaments. Instructors were Trudy Jimmie, May McGeisey & Lorena Alex.

Christmas ornament beading classes have become so popular they have become another fashion of promoting & sharing Choctaw traditional beading.

DCI Christmas

On Tuesday, Dec. 19, the Department of Chahta Immi (DCI) held their annual Christmas luncheon & staff meeting at the Pearl River Entertainment Trailer.

A presentation on the Choctaw Tribal Elders Oral History Project was given by Eddie Johnson, Special Project Media Coordinator. Each DCI supervisor gave a brief summary of their program’s operation & activities. The staff then played a game of Dirty Santa & had their feast afterwards.

Christmas caroling for Tribal elders was held at the Choctaw Eldery Activity Center on Thursday, Dec. 21. The message of the birth of Jesus through Christmas songs were sung in Choctaw by the DCI staff, coordinated by Peggy Williams, Choctaw Tribal Language Program Language Resource & Liaison.

DCI Attends Festival

A Choctaw social dance group performed & gave cultural presentations at the Winter Solstice Celebration: Native American Festival in Tallahassee, Florida. The event was held at Mission San Luis on Dec. 16-17, 2017.

Southeastern Native American dancing & cultural demonstrations, such as stickball, crafts & storytelling, were presented.

Social dancers included DCI Director Jay Wesley, Danielle Wesley, Jocelyn Wesley, Jaeden Wesley, CAP Coordinator Phyliss McCmillan, Tora Shoemake, Wendy Thompson, Tryeston Thompson, Miya Steve, Teara Phillips, Toby Lewis, Casey Bigpond, Rian Willis, Garrison Joe, Ken Frazier, & Priscilla Williams.

Stickball exhibition participants included Casey Bigpond, Rian Willis, Garrison Joe, Ken Frazier, & Tryeston Thompson.

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Pictured right is the DCI staff with displays of Choctaw drums & a Choctaw traditional Christmas holly tree in front of the Chahta Immi Cultural Center.
IN MEMORIAM

CECILIA ANNA CABRERA

Funeral service for Cecilia Anna Cabrera, 30, was held on Tuesday, January 2, 2018, from the Bogue Chitto Facility Building. Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.

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

Ms. Cabrera passed away on Dec. 29, 2017, in Neshoba County.

She was a Call Center Agent at the Pearl River Resort. She enjoyed being with family & friends, playing stickball, beading, cooking outdoors, & coaching basketball.

She was preceded in death by her mother, Junie Cabrera; step-father, Fraley Wallace; brother, Fredrick Ronald Wallace; grandparents, G.W. & Ann Bell; two aunts; three uncles; a great-uncle; three nephews; & a companion, Larry Shane Thomas.

Survivors include her daughters, Mona Frazier, Aiyana Frazier & Morningstar Frazier; sons, Raven Frazier & Blackcloud Frazier; sisters, Melissa Wallace, Virginia Rochelle Wallace, Deelenna Jefferson, & Melinda Wallace; brothers, Kenneth Wallace & Jonathan Reyes Cabrera; four aunts; four uncles; one great-aunt; five great-uncles; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

FREDICK RONALD WALLACE

Funeral service for Fredrick Ronald Wallace, 36, was held on Tuesday, January 2, 2018, from the Bogue Chitto Community Gymnasium. Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.

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

Mr. Wallace passed away on Dec. 29, 2017, in Neshoba County.

He was a Greeter at Silver Star Hotel & Casino. He enjoyed being with family & friends, playing stickball & basketball, & fishing.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Junie Cabrera & Fraley Wallace; sister, Cecilia Anna Cabrera; grandparents, G.W. & Ann Bell, Lincoln & Samantha Wallace; two aunts; three uncles; a great-uncle; & three nephews.

Survivors include his daughters, Daebreon Wallace, Nikitta Wallace & Kaydence Wallace; sisters, Melissa Wallace, Virginia Rochelle Wallace, Deelenna Jefferson, & Melinda Wallace; brothers, Kenneth Wallace & Jonathan Cabrera; special friend, Elizabeth Robinson; four aunts; four uncles; two great-aunts; two great-uncles; & a host of relatives & friends.

LARRY SHANE THOMAS

Funeral service for Larry Shane Thomas, 37, was held on Wednesday, January 3, 2018, from the Pearl River Pentecostal Church. Pastor Harvey King officiated.

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

Mr. Thomas passed away on Dec. 29, 2017, in Neshoba County.

He was a member of Greenhill Methodist Church. He was a Group Team Leader at the Boys & Girls Club-Bok Cito Unit. He was previously with MBCI Protective Services & a lifeguard. He enjoyed playing basketball, taking kids on field trips & running.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Claude & Priscilla Isaac, Amos & Lillie Thomas; & a companion, Cecilia Cabrera.

Survivors include his parents, Madge Isaac & Larry C. Thomas; a daughter, Haylen Thomas; sons, Hayden Thomas & Redainen Thomas; sisters, Jennifer Thomas & Toni Thomas; a brother, Shaun Thomas; one aunt; six uncles; two great-aunts; two great-uncles; & a host of relatives & friends.

Randy Hickman

Funeral service for Randy Hickman, 52, was held on Thursday, January 4, 2018, from the Pearl River Pentecostal Church. Pastor Harvey King officiated.

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

Mr. Hickman passed away on Dec. 31, 2017, at his residence.

He was a U.S. Army & Army National Guard veteran. He was a medical & instructional aide

......see OBITS, pg. 18
Marilyn Billy

Funeral service for Marilyn Billy, 64, was held on Thursday, January 4, 2018, from the Standing Pine Facility Building. Bro. Shelly Peoples officiated. Burial was in the Hopewell Baptist Church Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements. Ms. Billy passed away on Dec. 31, 2017, at her grandson’s residence. She was retired from Division of Schools & enjoyed being with family, social dancing, traveling, cooking, sewing, & watching her favorite TV shows. She was preceded in death by her parents, Greer & Leona Sam Billy; sisters, Nellie Ruth Billy, Valena Jean Billy, Louise Billy Jim Lopez, Margia Nell Billy Homer, Virginia Carol Billy James, & Maude Billy Durant; brothers, Laverne Billy & Richard Billy; & a grandchild. Survivors include her daughters, Trisalena Tubby, Tracy Billy & Tessa Sanders; a son, Malachi Steve; a sister, Sarah Cantu; brothers, Adam Billy & Daniel Billy; 10 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Sally Ann Farmer

Funeral service for Sally Ann Farmer, 67, was held on Saturday, January 6, 2018, from the Holy Rosary Catholic Church in Tucker. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated. Burial was in the church cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements. Ms. Farmer passed away on Jan. 3, 2018, at St. Dominic Hospital in Jackson. She was a Greeter at Silver Star Hotel & Casino. She enjoyed being with her son, gardening, cooking, & tending to her yard. She was preceded in death by her parents, Mose & Cleimmie Farmer; sisters, Latina Farmer, Mose & Clennie Farmer; & Andre Boulley; 10 grandchildren; 4 aunts; & 7 uncles. Survivors include her daughters, Kayla Waiter & Kandria Waiter; son, Jakob Waiter; brother, Thomas Waiter, Jr.; 4 grandchildren; 4 aunts; an uncle; & a host of relatives & friends.

Alvin Keith Waiter

Funeral service for Alvin Keith Waiter, 45, was held on Wednesday, January 10, 2018, from the Pine Bluff Baptist Church in Sebastopol. Deacon Joseph Wesley & Rev. Robert Patrick officiated. Burial was in the church cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements. Mr. Waiter passed away on Jan. 7, 2018, at his residence. He was employed with the MBCI Protective Services Unit. He enjoyed being with his family, traveling, golfing, & watching football. He was preceded in death by his parents, Thomas Waiter, Sr. & Selina Billie Waiter. Survivors include his daughters, Kayla Waiter & Kandria Waiter; son, Jakob Waiter; brother, Thomas Waiter, Jr.; 4 grandchildren; 4 aunts; an uncle; & a host of relatives & friends.

Deanrick Shea Isom, Jr.

Funeral service for Deanrick Shea Isom, Jr., 19 day-old infant, was held on Saturday, January 13, 2018, from the Greenhill Methodist Church in Pearl River.

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OBITS ......................................................................................................................................... continued from page seventeen
Rev. Daniel Tubby officiated.

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

Infant Isom passed away on Jan. 8, 2018, at the University Medical Center in Jackson.

He was preceded in death by his twin sister, Faith Isom; great-grandfather, Benford Tubby; great-great grandparents, Elizabeth & Irvin Jefferson; & an aunt.

Survivors include his parents, Jenna Tubby & Deanrick Isom, Sr.; sisters, Trinity Isom, Dawnanna Tubby, Macy Clemons, Emma Isom, & Mila Isom; brothers, Deandra Clemons, Riley Clemons, Avery Isom, & LaDianian Isom; grandparents, Tammie Williams & Ronnie Reed; parents, Tammie Williams & Deanrick Isom, Sr.; foster sons, Roger Ben, James Ben & Cecil Ben; 3 nieces; a nephew; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; & a host of relatives & friends.

Winnie Sue Joe Henry Willis

Funeral service for Winnie Sue Joe Henry Willis, 79, was held on Saturday, January 13, 2018, from the Bogue Chitto Baptist Church. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

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

Ms. Willis passed away on Jan. 9, 2018, at Regency Hospital in Meridian.

She was a member of the Bogue Chitto Baptist Church & served as director of the Woman’s Missionary Union & Hospitality Committee. She was a homemaker & enjoyed fishing, gardening, sewing, cooking, & doing mission work.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Austin & Lola Bell Joe; husband, Norman Henry; a son, Rexdale Henry; sister, Mary Sue Willis; & brothers, Less Joe, Marshall Joe & Thad Joe.

Survivors include her son, Ronnie D. Henry, Sr.; foster sons, Roger Ben, James Ben & Cecil Ben; 3 nieces; a nephew; 10 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; & a host of relatives & friends.

Elizabeth Bell Allen

Funeral service for Elizabeth Bell Allen, 70, was held on Friday, January 12, 2018, from her residence in Bogue Chitto. Bro. Jason Martin officiated.

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


She was Pentecostal by faith. She loved spending time with her family. She attended New Zion Pentecostal Church & was involved in the Living Water United Pentecostal Church.

She was preceded in death by her parents John Levi Bell, Sr. & Maggie Wallace Bell; husband, Freeman Allen; brothers, Benny Bell, Lawrence Bell & Benjamin Bell; & a grandson.

Survivors include her daughters, Trina Jim, Cheryl Allen Willis & Lindsay Allen; sisters, Dorothy Wilson & Sally Bell; half-brother, John Levi Bell, Jr.; 8 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Susan Irene Smith Frazier

Funeral service for Susan Irene Smith Frazier, 51, was held on Saturday, January 13, 2018, from the Pearl River Baptist Church. Bro. Eddie Johnson officiated.

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

Mrs. Frazier passed away on Jan. 12, 2018, at her residence.

She was employed at MBCI Employment & Training then became a homemaker. She enjoyed being with her family, gardening & landscaping.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Alton & Susie Smith; sister, Rita Allen; & a grandchild.

Survivors include her husband, Elvie L. Frazier; daughters, Erica McMillan, Ariane Frazier & Alanna Frazier; sisters, Mae Bell, Ina Solomon & Tonya Reed; brothers, Johnny Smith & Chancellor Solomon; 8 grandchildren; & a host of relatives & friends.

Ron Keith Lewis

Funeral service for Ron Keith Lewis, 31, was held on Saturday, January 27, 2018, from the Standing Pine Community Gymnasium. Bro. Shelly Peoples officiated.

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

Mr. Lewis passed away on Jan. 23, 2018, in Philadelphia. He was employed at McDonalds in Philadelphia.

He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Prentis & Lula Lewis; an aunt & and uncle.

Survivors include his daughter, Keianna Lynn Lewis; companion, Evanna Dixon; parents, Ronald Jim, Sr. & Betty Jane Lewis; sister, Lisa Lewis; brothers, Ryan Lewis, Sr., Jeremy Vaughn, Ronan Jim, & Ronald Jim, Jr.; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.
DPS Announces Policy Change

Article provided by the MS Department of Public Safety

The Mississippi Department of Public Safety (DPS) has changed its policy regarding the suspension of driver’s licenses for unpaid fines, fees, or assessments under Mississippi Code § 63-1-53(1) and (2)(h).

DPS has discontinued the suspension of driver’s licenses solely upon notice of unpaid fines, fees, and assessments under those statutory provisions. This official policy will remain in place unless and until future significant developments occur, such as a statutory change.

Driver’s licenses will continue to be suspended for all of the reasons permissible under Mississippi law, including but not limited to Mississippi Code Section 63-1-51(f) that provides for a one-year suspension of licenses upon a court order finding a driver in contempt for failure to pay a fine or fee or failure to respond to a traffic summons or citation.

DPS will reinstate licenses previously suspended solely for nonpayment of fines, fees, or assessments under section 63-1-53(1) and 20), and the reinstatement fees for such licenses will be waived. DPS will provide written notice to those affected by this decision.

For drivers whose license privileges have been suspended for multiple reasons, including grounds other than non-payment of court assessed fines and fees pursuant to Mississippi Code § 63-1-53 (1) and (2)(h), DPS will remove the non-payment basis for suspension, but the driver’s license suspension will continue until the other reasons for suspension have been cleared.

DPS will provide written notice to those affected by this decision.

The reinstatement of these licenses will not relieve the drivers of the legal obligation to pay the fines, fees, or assessments.

CTEOHP .................. continued from page fifteen

resources. A website was designed by the CTEOHP staff to be the main channel to present cultural educational resources to the public.

On December 15, 2017, the www.choc-tawculturallegacy.com website was launched to the public. A link to the website can be found on the www.choc-taw.org homepage for those interested in seeing the past come to life.

The photo (pictured left) was provided by Harold “Doc” Comby of the Pearl River Community as it features his grandmother, Allie Chitto Comby, & an unidentified lady as they were preparing cane for basket weaving.

“All this would not have been possible without the help of Choctaw tribal members, Chief Phyliss J. Anderson and the Tribal Government, and support from the Multicultural Initiative for Community Advancement (MICA),” said Johnson.

For more information about the Choctaw Tribal Elders Oral History Project, contact the Special Projects/Media Program at (601)663-7735.