Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben (left of center, in suit & tie) stands with Tribal officials, MBCI Boys & Girls Club staff & members, project partners & community members as the ribbon is cut for the new Boys & Girls Club Tiak Hikiya Unit facility in the Standing Pine Community.

Ben Wins Second Term as Tribal Chief

CHOCTAW, Miss. - The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians held an election for Tribal Chief and eight Tribal Council positions in seven of the eight Tribal communities. On Tuesday, June 6, 2023, an estimated 3,000 registered voters went to the polls to cast their vote. For the first time in Tribal history, an electronic voting system was used to tally votes. The Tribal Election Committee opened absentee ballots on Wednesday, June 7, then distributed the Official Election Results on Thursday, June 8.

Incumbent Cyrus Ben won re-election with 1997 or 61.6% of the vote. A percentage majority, 50% plus 1, is required for the Tribal Chief seat. Phylliss Anderson, who held the position of Tribal Chief from 2011 until 2019, came in second with 1096 votes. Tarina K. Anderson received 149 votes.

"I am humbled by the overwhelming support from the Tribal voters," said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. "I love my Tribe. From day one my main promise was to work hard moving our Tribe in the right direction. I have fulfilled this promise and will continue to do so. Martin Luther King, Jr., stated, 'The true measure of a man is not how he behaves in moments of..."

MBCI Boys & Girls Club Cuts Ribbon For Standing Pine Facility

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Boys & Girls Club held a ribbon cutting and open house for the new Boys & Girls Club Tiak Hikiya Unit in the Standing Pine Community (Leake County) on Friday, May 26, 2023. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, members of the Choctaw Tribal Council, MBCI Boys & Girls Club officials, and community members were present to celebrate the opening.

"I appreciate the hard work and efforts of our Boys & Girls Club leadership and staff who have greatly expanded the reach of the Club across our Tribal communities," said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. "After multiple years of being open only during the summers, the Tiak Hikiya Unit will now be open the full year. This is a great thing for the community and program. The Boys & Girls Club help to promote and inspire our youth to be responsible and engaged citizens of our Tribe and our world."

The opening of this facility is a great milestone for Standing Pine. The new facility is a renovated building that formerly housed the community’s Early Childhood program. After 101 youth signed up during a membership drive in March 2018, the Boys & Girls Club created a pilot program in the summers of 2018 and 2019. Both summer pilot programs were a great success. So along came the idea for the Tiak..."
Halito!

We are at the end of another school year, and summer break has begun. I am proud of the achievements of our students throughout the year, whether they were in academics, athletics, or in the visual and performing arts. I am also proud of our graduates, from those transitioning from early childhood to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to college.

Thank you to our district office staff, principals, teachers, assistant teachers, counselors, secretaries, nurses, librarians, coaches, custodians, cafeteria workers, maintenance crews, bus drivers, and all other school personnel for everything you did every day to ensure our students were learning in the safest and most nurturing environment possible.

To our students, every step forward you take on your educational journey is one to be proud of. Our ancestors, and even our parents and grandparents, dreamed of a better life and better opportunities for advancement for future generations. Let those thoughts be your guide and motivation to reach even greater levels of success. To our high school graduates, keep up the effort and good work in college, the military or the workforce. And to our college graduates, I offer my congratulations and best wishes as you begin to seek out career opportunities.

Everyone is excited about our upcoming Choctaw Indian Fair. Stickball teams are now practicing more often, our Princess Pageant contestants are beginning their practices, and our fairgrounds are getting spruced up. I thank each and every individual who is currently very busy making sure this year’s Fair is the best one yet.

Our first taste of stickball will come June 7-10, at Choctaw Central Warrior Stadium, as our youth ages 9 to 12 will have the opportunity to showcase their skills on the field during the State Games of Mississippi Youth Stickball Tournament. I can’t wait to see them out there, playing with the same passion and heart of stickball players generations past. I am proud of our youth players and wish them the best of luck at the State Games and also during the Fair.

Bracket Selection Night will be held on June 12 at the Pearl River Amphitheater, and our stickball teams are eagerly awaiting to see who they will have to play against and defeat to win the coveted title of World Series Stickball Champion!

Our annual Unity Walk will be held on Saturday, June 24. I love watching all of the stickball teams walk from their respective practice fields and meet up at the Choctaw Central softball field parking lot and then walk as one group in unity to the Pearl River Amphitheater. Seeing all the players in their team jerseys, supporting each other and walking to the beat of the drum united against diabetes is an experience like no other.

Although we have recently held ribbon cuttings and open houses for the new Personal Vocational Adjustment Training facility with the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, Tiak Hikiya Boys and Girls Club Unit facility, and the Boys and Girls Club Teen Center, and celebrated a kickoff for the expansion of Choctaw Fresh Produce, there are still more projects that are currently starting or ongoing.

We are going through the
**Boys & Girls Club Teen Center Opens**

The Boys & Girls Club of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house for its new Teen Center facility on Thursday, June 1, 2023. Special guests included Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Choctaw Tribal Council members Vice-Chief Ronnie Henry, Sr., Kent Wesley, Loriann Ahshapanek, Wilma Simpson-McMillan, Angela Hundley, Kendall Wallace, Demando Mingo, Christopher Eaves and Timothy Thomas, Sr., 2022-2023 Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Raine Nickey, project partners and Brandee Paisano from the Boys & Girls Club of America Native Services. Former Club member Annalise Bell served as emcee as members of the Conehatta Unit sang the National Anthem in the Choctaw language. Speakers included Chief Ben, MBCI Boys & Girls Club Director Glen Billie, Teen Center Director Gail Lilly, former Club member & success story Kidd Samuel & Ms. Paisano. Philanthropist MacKenzie Scott was thanked for her generous donation which helped make the construction of the Teen Center a reality. Following the speeches, the Boys & Girls Club dancers performed the Jump Dance, Stealing Partners Dance and the Walk Dance. Tribal officials, Club members and staff and community members gathered around to witness the ribbon being cut! Attendees took part in self-guided tours of the facility and enjoyed refreshments. Thank you to the Boys & Girls Club staff for everything you do to mentor & guide our Tribal youth!

**Lil' Squirts Opens at Geyser Falls**

On Wednesday, June 7, 2023, Geyser Falls Water Theme Park in Choctaw held an official opening and ribbon cutting for the newly-renovated Lil’ Squirts area, which features custom tribal-inspired designs including 8-point stars representing the 8 Tribal communities of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Choctaw Tribal Council members Angela Hundley & Demando Mingo, & 2022-2023 Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Raine Nickey were on hand to celebrate this special event with the Geyser Falls Water Theme Park team.

Chi Yakokilih,
Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief
comfort and convenience but how he stands at times of controversy and challenges."

We have done a great deal of work over the past four years, through the Pandemic and multiple states of emergencies, and I am honored the voters saw that and chose to allow me to stay in this position. For as long as the people see fit, and even after, I will work tirelessly for this Tribe. I’ve never hit the brakes since I took oath in 2019 and have no plan to slow down. There is more for us to do. Again, I thank all those that supported me. It's time to come together as a Tribe and keep moving forward in the right direction."

Tribal Council positions are won by a majority count, even if the winner does not receive more than half of the votes cast, and an individual can win by just one vote. After absentee ballots were counted, the Tribal Council outcomes are as follows:

- In Bogue Chitto (Neshoba/Kemper Counties, Henning, Tenn.) incumbent Ronnie Hendry, Sr. won his seat with 316 out of a total 455 votes.
- In Bogue Homa (Jones County) challenger Berdie M. Steve unseated incumbent Michael Briscoe by just three votes, 58 to 55.
- In Conehatta (Newton County) incumbent Timothy Thomas, Sr. retained his seat with a final count of 115 votes.
- In Pearl River (Neshoba County) 20 candidates vied for one seat with incumbent Nigel Gibson winning with 229 votes.
- In Red Water (Leake County) two seats were up for grabs amongst 11 candidates. Ricky Anderson, Sr. and Samuel John

continued next page
Chief Ben's campaign held an election results rally on Tuesday evening, June 6, 2023, at the Neshoba Coliseum in Philadelphia as hundreds of supporters witnessed Ben being re-elected to a second term as Tribal Chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Supporters gathered outside on the coliseum grounds for a celebratory fireworks show after the results were announced.

won with 139 and 113, respectively.

- In Standing Pine (Leake County) incumbent Richard Sockey won his race with 143 votes.
- In Tucker (Neshoba County) challenger Dorothy Bell Wilson won with 124 votes against incumbent Wilma Simpson-McMillan (122 votes).

The next Tribal Election will be the "mid-terms" in June 2025 where the other nine Tribal Council positions will be up for election.

Chief Ben's campaign held an election results rally on Tuesday evening, June 6, 2023, at the Neshoba Coliseum in Philadelphia as hundreds of supporters witnessed Ben being re-elected to a second term as Tribal Chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Supporters gathered outside on the coliseum grounds for a celebratory fireworks show after the results were announced.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben (far right), MBCI Director of Economic Development John Hendrix (far left), & MBCI Director of Administration Jason Grisham (second from left) with members of the farming & distribution crews of Choctaw Fresh Produce (CFP) as they celebrate the kickoff of their expansion. CFP is expanding its business in order to help provide more organic fresh produce to the Tribe. Kickoff for Expansion Project at Choctaw Fresh Produce

Choctaw Fresh Produce (CFP), one of the outstanding businesses owned and operated by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, held a kickoff celebration for its expansion project on Wednesday, May 17, 2023.

CFP is expanding its business in order to help provide more organic fresh produce to the Tribe which received a $1.8 million grant award from the USDA – Local Food Purchase Assistance Cooperative Agreement Program. The funds will support the purchase of local food for distribution to all Tribal members. The Tribe will utilize the grant funds to purchase and distribute local foods, procure vehicles, including a refrigerated truck, to distribute food items to the communities, and to cover employee wages and other operating expenses.

“I am always grateful whenever any of our businesses not only succeed, but expand their footprint,” said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. “I am thankful to the staff of Choctaw Fresh Produce, as well as the Office of Economic Development, for their hard work and dedication in creating this opportunity for expansion.”

This project is expected to provide several thousand pounds of food to Tribal members and create four new positions: Distribution Coordinator, Harvest Supervisor, Mobile Market Operator, and Mobile Market Technician. The project will last at least through December 2024, but the Tribe has already applied for the LFPA Plus grant program that would add another year, if awarded.
SPECIAL CALL MEETING
MAY 11, 2023

RESOLUTION CHO 23-080, authorizing execution of a First Amendment to the November 23, 2021 amended & restated credit agreement of the Choctaw Resort Development Enterprise and Tribe with KeyBank National Association, as administrative agent & the lenders party thereto to convert to a Secured Overnight Financing Rate (“SOFR”) to replace the current LIBOR Rate which will no longer be available, was ADOPTED - 9 YES (M. Briscoe, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., R. Isaac, H. Nickley, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr., & K. Wallace); 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN (C. Eaves); 7 ABSENT (L. Ashapaneke, A. Hundley, S. Johnson, D. Martin, W. McMillan, D. Mingo, K. Wesley).

**SUMMARY:** The Resolution authorizes the Choctaw Resort Development Enterprise Board of Directors (“the Enterprise”), pursuant to Ordinance 56, Section 11(g)(2) the power to operate & make policies for the Enterprise, may borrow money & enter other financing & credit arrangements for enterprise purposes, subject to approval of the Tribal Council. Pursuant to Resolution CRDE 22-001 & MBCI Resolution CHO 22-011 the Enterprise Board & the Tribal Council approved a senior secured credit facility of up to $50,000,000 to refinance the Enterprises existing credit facility & provide working capital funds to the Enterprise & on November 23, 2021 the Enterprise & Tribe entered into an Amended & Restated Credit Agreement with KeyBank National Association, as Administrative Agent, Swingline Lender & L/C Lender (the “Administrative Agent”) & the lenders party thereto from time to time (the “Lenders”) to evidence the credit facility approved by the Enterprise Board & Tribal Council (the “Credit Agreement” & together with the other loan documents executed in connection therewith the “Loan Documents”). Pursuant to Enterprise Resolution CRDE 23-006, the Enterprise Board found that the amendments as provided in the First Amendment which are required to replace the LIBOR Rate with Daily Simple SOFR or adjusted Term SOFR Rate as the benchmark rate under the Credit Agreement & Loan Documents is in the best interest of the Enterprise & the Tribe to approve the First Amendment to the Credit Agreement. The Tribal Chief & the Secretary-Treasurer are directed to report back to the Tribal Council when the First Amendment to the Credit Agreement has been executed. For more information, please contact Pearl River Resort.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-081, approving the 2023 Choctaw Community Fund Budget, was ADOPTED - 9 YES; 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT.

**SUMMARY:** The Resolution approves the 2023 Community Fund Budget.

Tribe Holds Wreath Laying Ceremony
The Laying of the Memorial Wreath Ceremony, in observance of the Memorial Day Holiday, was held at the Choctaw Veterans Memorial in Choctaw on Friday, May 26, 2023. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Nickey served as emcee as the Choctaw Veterans Color Guard presented the colors. Bro. Gerald Willis, Sr. of Choctaw Missionary Baptist Church offered a brief devotional & gave the invocation. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben offered brief remarks & thanked the Veterans for their service. Nana Frazier, who sang the National Anthem in the Choctaw language earlier in the program, gave an inspirational speech regarding the military service of Native Americans throughout the history of our country, both men, & then women, as they were allowed to serve. Following Ms. Frazier’s remarks, Chief Ben, Princess Nickey, Choctaw Veterans Affairs Director Sammie Wilson, & the Veterans Color Guard ceremonially placed the wreath at the center of the Veterans Memorial. MBCI Protective Services then presented the 21-gun salute, followed by TAPS & a Memorial Song played on the flute by James Willis. Veterans Affairs Director Wilson concluded the program by thanking everyone for attending.

Honoring Fallen Tribal Veterans
In observance of honoring fallen Tribal Veterans, members of the MBCI Choctaw Veterans Committee, along with Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Nickey, & members of the Tribal Council, visited community cemeteries to honor all Tribal Veterans by placing flags at their gravesites. They did this in honor of these Veterans during the Memorial Day Holiday. Family members of Veterans were invited to participate in these visits. Thank you to everyone who took the time to honor our Tribal Veterans!
The commercial land assignment will allow Roy White d/b/a Fluff & Fold to operate its business to provide a self-serve operated laundry in the Bogue Chitto Community, situated in Neshoba County, Miss. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Shopping Center.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-086, amending the list of persons eligible for appointment to serve as Choctaw Supreme Court Justices Pro-Tem & to appoint a Chief Justice to hear cases appealed from the Criminal Division of the Choctaw Tribal Court, was ADOPTED - 9 YES; 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the list of persons eligible for appointments to serve as the Choctaw Supreme Court Justices Pro-Tem. The Tribal Council Enacted Ordinance No.16-ITT for the Choctaw Tribal Code by establishing a procedure for the appointment of alternate Choctaw Supreme Court justices to serve in the event that a regularly appointed Choctaw Supreme Court Justice cannot hear a case. Section §7-1-13 of the Choctaw Tribal Code provides that the Tribal Council provides must certify a list of persons eligible for appointment to serve as Choctaw Supreme Court justices pro-tem on an annual basis. On April 11, 2023, the Tribal Council adopted Resolutions CHO 23-074 & 23-079, which certified the annual list of persons eligible for appointment to serve as Choctaw Supreme Court justices pro-tem & appointed a judge from the Criminal Division of the Choctaw Tribal Court to serve as interim Chief Justice. The Tribal Council deemed it necessary to appoint a Chief Justice pro-tem to hear cases tried by the Criminal Division of the Choctaw Tribal Court since the interim Justice cannot hear a case. The Tribal Council has the authority to appoint a Chief Justice pro-tem to hear cases tried by the Criminal Division of the Choctaw Tribal Court since the interim Justice cannot hear a case.

Tribe receives HUD Grant

On Monday, May 22, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) awarded $95 million to 55 communities through the Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG) Program. Grant funds may be used for infrastructure, community facilities, housing rehabilitation, economic development, and more to support Native American and Alaskan Native families on Indian reservations and in other Indian areas.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians were awarded $688,559 to rehabilitate 30 homes to address overcrowding and housing shortages for low- and moderate income Tribal families. “The Biden-Harris Administration is committed to sharing resources with Tribal communities so they can meet their own unique needs,” said HUD Secretary Marcia L. Fudge. “The funding announced today will help make Tribal communities safer, healthier, and help families thrive.”

The ICDBG program is a competitive grant that provides a range of eligible activities on reservations and related areas. Eligible activities include housing rehabilitation, land acquisition, roads, water and sewer facilities, and single or multipurpose community buildings.
Chief Justice is prohibited from hearing cases appealed from that division. The Tribal Council does hereby amend the list of persons eligible to serve as Choctaw Supreme Court justices pro-tem by certifying Holly Peters to serve as a Choctaw Supreme Court justice pro-tem & to serve as Chief Justice pro-tem in all cases appealed from the Criminal Division of the Choctaw Tribal Court until a regularly appointed Chief Justice takes office. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Tribal Courts.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-087, authorizing a special recall election for Tribal Council Member Christopher Eaves in the Crystal Ridge Community for Council Member Christopher Eaves to be held on June 13, 2023, & to be conducted by the Tribal Election Committee in accordance with the Tribal Election Code. Pursuant to, Section 7 of Article VI of the Revised Constitution & Bylaws of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians & Section §33-3-3 of Title XXXIII (Choctaw Tribal Election Code) of the Tribal Code establishes the procedures for Community members to petition for the recall of a Tribal Council member elected by a Community to the Tribal Council. Should the recall be approved by the voters, Article VI, Sections 1 & 2, above, shall apply. For more information, please contact the Tribal Election Office.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-088 (B), rescinding Resolution CHO 21-106(B) & to designate sites in the Tucker Community for the development, maintenance, & administration of single-family housing units by Choctaw Housing Authority, was ADOPTED - 9 YES; 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution authorizes a special election on the question of recall in the Crystal Ridge Community for Council Member Christopher Eaves to be held on June 13, 2023, & to be conducted by the Tribal Election Committee.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-089, confirming the judicial appointment of Anthony Drew Taylor as Criminal Court Judge to the Choctaw Tribal Courts, was ADOPTED - 9 YES; 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the confirmation of the Judicial Appointment of Anthony Drew Taylor, Criminal Court Judge, to fulfill a four-year term ending on the date of the Regular Call Tribal Council meeting on July 13, 2027, or until a successor has been duly nominated & confirmed for a subsequent term. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Tribal Courts.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-090, confirming the Judicial Appointment of Peggy Gibson as Criminal Court Judge to the Choctaw Tribal Courts, was ADOPTED - 9 YES; 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the confirmation of the Judicial Appointment of Peggy Gibson, Criminal Court Judge, to fulfill a four-year term ending on the date of the Regular Call Tribal Council meeting on July 13, 2027, or until a successor has been duly nominated & confirmed for a subsequent term. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Tribal Courts.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-091, confirming the Judicial Appointment of Holly Peters as Youth Court Judge to the Choctaw Tribal Courts, was ADOPTED - 9 YES; 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the confirmation of the Judicial Appointment of Holly Peters, Youth Court Judge, to fulfill a four-year term ending on the date of the Regular Call Tribal Council meeting on July 13, 2027, or until a successor has been duly nominated & confirmed for a subsequent term. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Tribal Courts.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-092, confirming the Judicial Appointment of Bradley Alex as Peacemaker Court Judge to the Choctaw Tribal Courts, was ADOPTED - 9 YES; 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the confirmation of the Judicial Appointment of Bradley Alex, Peacemaker Court Judge, to fulfill a four-year term ending on the date of the Regular Call Tribal Council meeting on July 13, 2027, or until a successor has been duly nominated & confirmed for a subsequent term. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Tribal Courts.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-093, authorizing Travis Hedrick of Trident University International to conduct doctoral research on “The Perception of Tribal Leaders on the Impact of Education on Tribal Sovereignty and Governance”, was ADOPTED - 9 YES; 0 NO; 1 ABSTAIN; 7 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the confirmation of the Judicial Appointment of Holly Peters, Youth Court Judge, to fulfill a four-year term ending on the date of the Regular Call Tribal Council meeting on July 13, 2027, or until a successor has been duly nominated & confirmed for a subsequent term. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Tribal Courts.

TIAK HIKIYA CLUB .......... continued from page one

Hikiya Unit to have their own permanent facility.

Renovations to the newly-opened Boys & Girls Club facility include new roofing and a fresh coat of paint, funded entirely with Tribal funds. In addition, a new basketball court and volleyball court was built, funded by a $15,000 donation from HUD/Choctaw Housing Authority funds and MBCI Tribal Community Project Fund.

Standing Pine community members had a chance to tour the renovated facility & see all of the amenities the club has to offer.
Ribbon Cutting, Open House for New MBCI Vocational Rehabilitation Building

CHOCTAW, Miss. – The Department of Workforce Development for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians hosted a ribbon cutting and open house for its new Personal and Vocational Adjustment Training Center Office building on Wednesday, May 3, 2023.

Tribal officials, including Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Tribal Council members, MBCI Workforce Development Director Terry Ben, Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) Program Director Mary Lundy Meruvia, program staff and program service recipients, as well as project partners, were on hand to celebrate this new and much-needed facility to the Workforce Development program.

Personal and Vocational Adjustment Training prepares Tribal members who experience physical or mental conditions for competitive and integrated long-term employment. Real work contracts are used to train job seekers in real world employment expectations.

“This new facility will continue to advance the work that the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program does to serve Tribal members who utilize this program for specialized job training,” said Chief Ben. “The more resources we are able to provide to our training programs, the more opportunities our Tribal members will have to succeed by their own learned skills and talents – a true example of Choctaw Self-Determination.”

“The new Personal & Vocational Adjustment Training Office has been much needed for a long time for the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program,” said Workforce Development Director Terry Ben. “The previous doublewide trailer was old and unsafe for trainees and staff to use. We are thankful that the trainees and staff will have a new building to train and work out of. Furthermore, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the following persons and organizations for their part in the building of this new office: Chief Cyrus Ben, Members of the Choctaw Tribal Council, Office of Construction Management, IKBI, Mary Meruvia and others. Thank you!”

“The program staff and I were thrilled to have been able to play a part in the planning of this new office space funded by the Tribal Administration,” said VRS Program Director Mary Meruvia. “We believe this building will benefit and will be enjoyed by staff and clients who receive services from Vocational Rehabilitation for decades to come.”

The new addition is 1,590 square-feet of inside office space (53’x30’) and includes a classroom/breakroom, four offices, a blueberry packing space, a restroom, one shower with laundry space for pesticide applicators, janitorial supply closet, and IT equipment storage closet. The facility is accessible to people with disabilities. There are three entrance/exit doors with porch, and an automatic door at the front entrance.

Construction on the new facility began in June 2022 and was completed in March of 2023. The architect on the project was William Crenshaw, and final inspection was performed by Brian Willis, both under the direction of Director Eddie Sam of Choctaw Construction Management.

Construction was by IKBI, Inc. The total cost of the project was $349,356.84 – which was 100 percent provided by Tribal funds. The Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program is cooperatively funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education (Grant # H250M190002) and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.
The 18th Annual Spring Into Fitness 2-Mile Fun Walk/Run was held on Saturday, March 18, 2023, at the parking lot of Geyser Falls Water Theme Park and on Blackjack Road in the Pearl River Community. This annual event was hosted by the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI).

Overall winners were Gavine Frazier (male) & Kylie Truss (female). Listed below is the overall winners and 1st & 2nd place finishers in each age category.

### SDPI Hosts 2 Mile Walk/Run

In the 7-Under Division -
- (male) 1st, Blake Billie; 2nd, Steven Bell; (female) 1st, Tayzlynn Hickman; 2nd, Teialyli Smith.

In the 8-12 Division -
- (male) 1st, Wyatt Chickaway; 2nd, Kazden Ben; (female) 1st, Arianna Charlie; 2nd, Aubery Wilson.

In the 13-18 Division -
- (male) 1st, Roman Charlie; 2nd, Kanzariah Chickaway; (female) 1st, Lakaylee Martin; 2nd, Elektra Tubby.

In the 19-29 Division -
- (male) 1st, Dregan Joe; 2nd, Zach Tubby; (female) 1st, Jayna Ben; 2nd, Mariel Sam.

In the 30-39 Division -
- (male) 1st, Todd Stephens; 2nd, Nehemiah Lewis; (female) 1st, Ashley Edwards; 2nd, Beldinda Cruz.

In the 40-49 Division -
- (male) 1st, Randy Tangle; 2nd, Bruce Jim; (female) 1st, April Allen; 2nd, Laura Dees.

In the 50-59 Division -
- (male) 1st, Nickey Charlie; 2nd, Gaylon Williams; (female) 1st, Melissa Charlie; 2nd, Gloria Willis.

In the 60-Over Division -
- (male) 1st, Kelly Miller; 2nd, Leonard Jimmie; (female) 1st, Cheryl Denson; 2nd, Ruthie Bell.

*Cultivating Kindness*" at CRC

National Skilled Nursing Care Week was observed from May 14-20, 2023, as the Choctaw Residential Center (CRC) staff & residents celebrated with various activities throughout the week. This year’s theme was "Cultivating Kindness" as the annual observance celebrates the essential role that skilled nursing care centers serve in providing safe & effective 24-hour nursing care to millions of individuals each year. The CRC staff & residents enjoyed a grill-out luncheon on Friday, May 19, & Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben made a stop to express his appreciation to the CRC staff & spent some time with the residents.
**COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY ENDED ON MAY 11, 2023**

The ending of the Public Health Emergency (PHE) allows us to celebrate and be optimistic that we are turning the corner from such a challenging time for our tribal communities.

**What will change at CHC?**
- Decrease in data reporting starting May 19, 2023
- MBCI COVID-19 dashboard will report on a weekly basis
- COVID-19 Dashboard will transition to monthly reporting at a later date to be determined
- Data will continue to be tracked daily for COVID-19 trends
- CHC COVID-19 Hotline: Available Monday-Friday, 8:00am-4:30pm. The weekend hotline service is discontinued
- *CHC COVID-19 Hotline: 601-389-4109*

**What will not change at CHC?**
- Ending of PHE doesn’t affect access to testing, vaccines, and COVID-19 treatments

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**COVID-19 no longer a Public Health Emergency—But we’re still here!**

Although Covid-19 is no longer a health emergency, the ongoing nature of the pandemic means that precautions and health guidelines should remain in place. CHC will continue to offer mental health support when needed.

**Mental Health Wellness**

This time of year, gardens are blooming. Plants need certain things: light, water, sunlight, and nutrients in order to stay healthy. Our minds also need to be nurtured in order to stay healthy.

Mental health is one of your greatest assets. It helps you focus, overcome obstacles, and have a good relationship with the people around you. Here are 10 proven tips that can help you feel stronger and more hopeful:

1. **Connect with others**
2. **Stay positive**
3. **Get physically active**
4. **Help others**
5. **Get enough sleep**
6. **Create joy and satisfaction**
7. **Eat well**
8. **Take care of your spirit**

Deal better with hard times (journal, shift your thinking)

Get professional help if you need it – Call Choctaw Behavioral Health at (601)899-4150, Monday-Friday 8 am to 4:30 pm.

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**Let’s Talk About Opioids**

What are opioids?

Opioids are a type of drug mostly used to reduce pain, including chronic headaches, backaches, post-surgery, or other injury.

There are two main kinds of opioids...

**Prescription opioids**

Are effective for managing pain. They also may have serious risks and side effects if misused, including anxiety, depression, addiction, and overdose. Common ones include oxycodone, hydrocodone, morphine, mefodiopine, codeine, and fentanyl.

**Illegal opioids**

Include heroin and diverted fentanyl, which have increased in use across the U.S. among most age groups. Continued use can lead to addiction, overdose and increased risks for HIV and hepatitis B and C. Traces of fentanyl have been found in other substances. Opioid overdose can occur if people use other drugs.

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**Covid->Meth->Suicide: The Cause and Effect**

Crystal Meth use has sadly risen in many local areas. Meth use has numerous dangers and health risks. Not only to just one’s physical body, but also to the mind and emotions. Drug use is a huge risk factor for suicide, and using meth specifically has been a contributing factor in the cause of suicide. Below, are a few more details of this cause and effect and how to reach out if anyone needs help in these areas. Please take care of your health, it is important!

**Suicide Crisis Lifeline- (Text or Call) 988**

COVID Hotline # 601-389-4075

COVID-19 Support Group: Thursday’s 12:00-1:00, CHC Healing Grounds at Choctaw Behavioral Health Conference Room.
CCHS Hosts 2023 Graduation Ceremony

Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) hosted graduation ceremonies honoring 108 members of the Class of 2023 on Tuesday, May 16, at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw. CCHS Principal Alaric Keams welcomed the audience as he said the occasion was about celebrating the seniors and their milestones.

“When I look at our graduating class, I see our future doctors, future educators, & future leaders of the Tribe,” said Keams. “I hate to see our seniors leave CCHS, but I’m excited about what the future holds for them.”

Senior Kaydee Taylor presented the invocation as Conehatta Elementary School students Namiyah Tubby and Zoe Chick-away performed the National Anthem in Choctaw.

In his remarks to the graduates, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben told them to embrace this moment because they earned it.

“I know this year has flown by, but I’m going to tell you, the rest of life can fly by within a blink of an eye. As it has been stated many times, the challenges that we faced, you seniors had four years of the most unique high school career anyone had ever had.”

Recalling how COVID-19 had affected life worldwide, CCHS students overcame great challenges to continue to pursue their educational goals. Chief Ben then read a quote by the late Helen Keller, “Optimism is a fate that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.”

“As I look at the senior class, I saw that hope and confidence as you went through these four years. Tonight, we celebrate you. We know the next chapter of your life will come with many successes,” said Chief Ben.

Salutatorian Jaeon Johnson, 18-year-old son of Jeron and Latricia Johnson of the Conehatta Community, thanked everyone for supporting the graduates as they now venture into new journeys.

“As we say goodbye to this institution, we reminisce on the memories we created here. For all of us, this departure is a reminder that time doesn’t stop for anyone,” said Johnson.

Among Johnson’s accolades are the ACT Award, December 2022 Rotary Student of the Month, and WTOK-TV’s All Scholastic Sports Team. He was a member of the Warriors football, soccer, baseball and golf teams.

Class of 2023 Salutatorian Jaeon Johnson (left) & Valedictorian Kaisen Edwards.

“We faced an unexpected pandemic that impacted everyone and our high school years, yet we persevered. That determination is what I admire about my people. We continue to move forward despite our difficulties.”

MERIDIAN, Miss.—Two outstanding graduates at Mississippi State University hope their stories of perseverance & resilience inspire others who live on the eight reservations of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Jade Willis of Bogue Chitto & Edward Routh of Choctaw recently were honored as the spring semester’s outstanding undergraduate student & outstanding graduate student, respectively, for MSU-Meridian’s Division of Education.

Despite losing several family members over the past few years, Willis has been determined to rise above her circumstances & complete her elementary education degree. She becomes one of a handful of Native American educators on the Bogue Chitto reservation.

For the past two decades, Routh has used his influence as assistant football coach at Choctaw Central High School to encourage players to go to college & better themselves.

“For years I’ve pushed young men to go get a degree, but in the back of my mind I kept thinking how hypocritical I sounded,” said Routh, who withdrew from East Central Community College in 2001 to join the Army.

“Alaric Keams, principal of Choctaw Central High School, is one of those young men I invested in,” Routh added. “He’s now my boss & is one of the driving forces behind my push to finish. He said to me, ‘you told me to do it—now you need to step up.’”

Routh spent seven years serving his country & several more in law enforcement on the reservation before he returned to ECCC in 2018 to complete his associate degree. Eager to finish strong, he transferred to MSU-Meridian where he earned an undergraduate degree in interdisciplinary studies, & last month the 53-year-old veteran completed a Master of Arts in Teaching Secondary Education. He also was promoted to head football coach—and this fall will be a physical education teacher at his alma mater as well.

“It’s no longer just words, you know; I can tell those young men, without hesitation, they need to pursue their dreams & it will happen if they educate themselves,” he said. “With many Native Americans on the reservation, college was never even discussed—you were expected to work or see GRADUATION, pg. 17
Bridgette Farve  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Hunter Farve  
Choctaw Central High School

Arral Frazier  
Choctaw Central High School

Bishop Frazier  
Choctaw Central High School

Jacob Frazier  
Choctaw Central High School

Trevor Frazier  
Choctaw Central High School

Robert Garcia, Jr.  
Mississippi College

Christian Hickman  
Choctaw Central High School

Terra Hickman  
Choctaw Central High School

Shaylynn Hunter  
Neshoba Central High School

Breanna Isaac  
Choctaw Central High School

Jordan Isaac  
Mississippi College

Mylena Isaac  
Neshoba Central High School

Destini Hernandez  
Fort Lewis College

Terrca Hickman  
Choctaw Central High School

Aison Jim  
Choctaw Central High School

Aleshanee Jim  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Atlantic Jim  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Catherine Jim  
Choctaw Central High School

Claysia Jim  
Neshoba Central High School

Makiny Jim  
Neshoba Central High School

Channing Jimmie  
Choctaw Central High School

Jeriah Jimmie  
Choctaw Central High School

Caleb Joe  
Hugo High School

Noah Joe  
Hugo High School

Christy John  
Choctaw Central High School

Gabriella John  
Baylor University

Myleayah John  
Choctaw Central High School

Addison Johnson  
Choctaw Central High School

Jason Johnson  
Choctaw Central High School

Kattlynn Johnson  
Choctaw Central High School

Kayllyn Johnson  
Choctaw Central High School

Mathias Johnson  
Choctaw Central High School

Zarius Johnson  
Newton County High School

DeAnnie King  
Choctaw Central High School

Emaliyah King  
Choctaw Central High School

Leonard Kopaddy  
Choctaw Central High School

Gage Lewis  
Choctaw Central High School

Ian Lewis  
Choctaw Central High School

Kristen Lewis  
Meridian Community College

Rayshaun Lewis  
Choctaw Central High School

Ayauna Littlejohn  
Northwest Rankin High School

Claire Lopez  
Choctaw Central High School

Rella Lopez  
Choctaw Central High School

Deangelo Lovato  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Lexie Love  
Choctaw Central High School

Isabelle Luis  
Choctaw Central High School

Kaidence Marshall  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Juleanna Mathias  
West Jones High School

Odessa McCurley  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Cadee McMillan  
Choctaw Central High School

Kayelin McMillan  
Tucker Early Childcare Center

Marguerita McMillan  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Tyshea McMillan  
Choctaw Central High School

Cory Hall, Jr.  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Tamaya Hampton  
Neshoba Central High School

Ramie Harrison  
East Central Community College

Erin Henry  
Neshoba Central High School

Milton Henry, Jr.  
Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Bonifacio Hernandez  
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Kattielyn Johnson  
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Choctaw Virtual Learning Center

Tyshea McMillan  
Choctaw Central High School
CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATE!

Congratulations to Melody Morgan Denson on receiving your Master’s Degree from Mississippi State University on Friday, May 12, 2023. Ceremonies were held at Davis-Wade Stadium in Starkville. Congratulations! From Mom, Hallie, Onna, & your village!
teams, CCHS Pow Wow Club, Chess Club and the Chahta Alla Youth Council. He plans to attend the University of Mississippi and major in chemistry. He would like to become the first Tribal member to be an orthodontist.

Valedictorian Kaisen Edwards, 18-year-old son of Kevin and Miriam Edwards of the Red Water Community, looked back at his first day at Choctaw Central in 2019 and overcoming the challenges of the pandemic soon after.

“As our school year progressed, we were met with the obstacle of COVID-19. Our school year was halted. The effects of COVID-19 lingered into our sophomore year,” said Edwards. “Today, I look back at our junior and senior years and think about how fast those years flew by. Everybody says high school years go by in a flash, and while it’s a cliche, that statement is the truth.”

Edwards told his fellow graduates to cherish not only this moment, but the time they have left.

“Many of our futures include attending colleges, trade school, entering the workforce, or serving our country through the military. Which ever plan you decide on, just know we are all cheering you on,” Edwards said.

Edwards’ accolades include being selected as the January 2023 Rotary Club Student of the Month, East Central Community College Dean’s List, and 4th Place in Language Arts at the State BETA Convention. In addition to the BETA Club, Kaisen was also a member of the ACT 25+ Club, Chess Club and the Chahta Alla Youth Council. He will attend East Central Community College in the fall, then attend Mississippi State University. He plans to have a career in education and eventually serve as a school principal.

Rounding out the Top Ten highest academically-ranked seniors were Deshaylee Tubby, Demidrea Stokes, Kaydee Taylor, Thomas Ben, Delycia Cunningham, Haygen Anderson, Landon Bounds, and Elliana Ben.

After the presentation of diplomas to the seniors and tokens of appreciation were handed out by the Choctaw Tribal Council, senior class treasurer Natayah Anderson offered the benediction. Principal Keams then announced to the audience the proud graduates of the Class of 2023.

MSU GRADUATES ................................................................. continued from page twelve

go into the military. While I’ve been trying to change that narrative with my players, I’ve also changed it for my own family. My daughter was recently accepted into dental school at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, & my wife earned her MBA.”

Willis’s dream as a young girl was to be a teacher. Her mom encouraged her by printing out worksheets for her teddy bears & helping her “grade” their papers. When her mom died during Willis’s senior year of high school, she thought her dream had too.

Instead of pursuing an elementary education degree, Willis began her educational journey as a business major, attending MSU-Meridian to live at home & help her sister care for their grandmother. Then her sister died from COVID, bringing Willis to the realization she truly needed to follow her dream.

“Teaching is my passion. And every time I’ve walked down the hallways of Bogue Chitto Elementary this past year—first as a teacher assistant through MSU-Meridian’s Professional Advancement Network for Teachers & Administrators initiative, & this past semester as a student intern—my mind has been flooded with memories,” said Willis. “This is the school I attended all the way through the eighth grade, & although I had great teachers, I realized I didn’t see a lot that looked like me—only teacher assistants.”

Willis wants to change that. “I’m trying to make these young kids more aware of the value of an education & the importance of their heritage as well. Right now, they may think I’m just another Choctaw kid living on the reservation, but when they see me as an actual teacher in my own classroom this fall, that’s huge,” she explained. “I’ve told my students all year—we can always be more than we think we are. I want their eyes open to the opportunities & possibilities that are out there, & maybe one day they will be inspired to return to the reservation & be an educator too.”

Although the road to success for both Willis & Routh may have been arduous at times, they are grateful for all the help & support they’ve received along the way.

“My wife & daughter have been great, as well as everyone at Choctaw Central High School, & the G.V. ‘Sonny’ Montgomery Center for America’s Veterans at Mississippi State was amazing,” said Routh. “Any time I needed assistance they were there, & the same goes for the faculty & instructors at MSU-Meridian,” he added.

“And if that wasn’t enough, I didn’t incur any debt thanks to the Tribal Scholarship Program & the G.I. Bill. It’s truly been an amazing journey.”

After she had already lost, over time, her mother, two uncles & her sister, Willis was broken when her last uncle died during fi-
Espinoza Receives Band Honors

Congratulations to Delvin R. Espinoza as he was honored during Neshoba Central Middle School Band's award banquet night. Among the honors he received included the Director's Cup Award, Platinum Merit Award, Joe Berry Mullins Band Competition - All Superior Award, Scott County Band Award, Queen City Band Award, & the Red Band Award - NCMS. Congratulations Drei! From your family.

HINU announces new president

WASHINGTON – Dr. Francis Arpan, a citizen of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, will serve as the new president of Haskell Indian Nations University. Founded in 1884, Haskell is a national center for Indian education, research, & cultural preservation located in Lawrence, Kansas.

“The Haskell National Board of Regents is very excited to welcome Dr. Arpan as our new Haskell Indian Nations University president,” said Brittany Hall, president of the Haskell Indian Nations Board of Regents. “We look forward to seeing him lead Haskell into the next era, build partnerships in Indian Country, & be a role model for our students, staff, & faculty.”

Arpan joined the faculty at Haskell in May 2022 as the vice president of academics. He previously served as the dean of academics at Sisseton Wahpeton College. He also gained professorial experience at the University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University, Aims Community College, & Southern New Hampshire University.

“Dr. Arpan comes to Haskell with a record of success in elevating the quality of higher education,” said Tony Dearman, director of the Bureau of Indian Education. “We look forward to Dr. Arpan’s leadership as he champions the university’s future as it shapes the next generation of American Indian leadership.”

Arpan plans to focus his vision for Haskell Indian Nations University on expanding opportunities for Tribal students across the country & creating a student-centered environment where all can develop professionally & personally to bring about an exciting & transformative learning environment.

“My career in higher education is rooted in a foundation of increasing resources & opportunities for all. What excites me the most about the position of president at Haskell Indian Nations University is the opportunity to continue working with Native students as they strive to attain their greatest capabilities & potential,” said Dr. Arpan.

“Higher education & educational attainment directly affect individuals’ life opportunities. As an academic & now Haskell president, I am excited to broaden our university’s role in actively working with Indigenous communities,” Arpan added.

CCHS Hosts Signing Ceremony

On May 5, 2023, several Choctaw Central High School seniors signed letters of intent to continue their educational & athletic careers at their respective colleges. Members of the CCHS coaching staff gave congratulatory speeches on the seniors’ successes & Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben wished them well on their new journeys. Congratulations to the following signees, along with their respective sport & college destination.

Football: Gannon Vaughn (Mississippi Delta Community College); Taiton Stokes & Brydon Wesley-LaSarge (Millsaps College).

Soccer: (Girls) Audrianna Billy (Tougaloo College); (Boys) Aison Jim (East Mississippi Community College).

Softball: Tyra Billy (Blue Mountain College).

Baseball: Gage Lewis & Braylon McMillian (Southeastern Baptist College).

Tribal Athletes Place at State Track Meet

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Softball: Tyra Billy (Blue Mountain College).

Baseball: Gage Lewis & Braylon McMillian (Southeastern Baptist College).

Pictures next page.
Mississippi Delta Community College signee Gannon Vaughn & family.

Wright signs with Jones College
Congratulations to Jamae Wright of Leake Central High School as she recently committed to continue her academic & athletic career with the Jones College Bobcats basketball program in Ellisville, Miss. Best wishes & good luck on your future endeavors.

Blue Mountain College signee Tyra Billy & family.

Jim signs with Blue Mountain College
Congratulations to Choctaw Central High School's Catherine Jim as she recently signed her intent to continue her academic & athletic career with the Blue Mountain College Toppers powerlifting & soccer programs in Blue Mountain, Miss. Best wishes & good luck on your future endeavors.

Southeastern Baptist College signee Braylon McMillian & family.

Millsaps College signee Taiton Stokes & family.

Southeastern Baptist College signee Gage Lewis & family.

Millsaps College signee Brydon Wesley-LaSarge & family.

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Mississippi Delta Community College signee Aison Jim & family.
Williams signs with Coffeyville CC
Congratulations to Mahle Jim, out of Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, Okla., as she signed a letter of intent to continue her academic & athletic career next season as a member of the Coffeyville Community College Red Ravens basketball program in Coffeyville, Kansas.

Jim signs with Coffeyville CC
Congratulations to Mahle Jim, out of Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, Okla., as she signed a letter of intent to continue her academic & athletic career next season as a member of the Coffeyville Community College Red Ravens basketball program in Coffeyville, Kansas.

Farve, Willis named to All-MACCC Team
Congratulations to Holmes Community College Lady Bulldogs softball team members Iris Farve & Elleigh Willis as they were named to the All-MACCC (Mississippi Association of Community Colleges Conference) Teams following the 2023 campaign. Farve, sophomore designated player, was named Second Team as she finished the season as the leading hitter with a .427 average with 61 hits, including 15 doubles, nine homeruns, & 46 RBI. Willis, sophomore pitcher, was named Honorable Mention as she was 12-7 on the mound with 78 strikeouts in 127 innings. She also batted .302 with 39 hits, including four doubles, one triple, two home runs, & 29 RBI. All-MACCC Teams were selected following a vote of the league’s head coaches.

Williams signs with Mississippi College
On Thursday, May 17, 2023, Neshoba Central High School Rocket student athlete Patsden Williams signed his intent to continue his academic & athletic career as a member of the Mississippi College Choctaws basketball team next fall. Family, friends, officials, teammates, & coaches joined Patsden as they congratulated him on his achievement. Best of luck in your future endeavors!

Beaulieu signs with Blue Mountain
Congratulations to East Central Community College Lady Warriors sophomore softball player Shante Beaulieu as she signed her intent to continue her academic & athletic career with the Blue Mountain College Toppers softball program. This past season, Beaulieu had a .260 hitting average with 34 hits, 5 doubles, a triple, a homerun, 23 RBI, & a stolen base.

Williams signs with Phoenix College
Congratulations to CeAnna Willis, out of Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, Okla., as she signed a letter of intent to continue her academic & athletic career next season as a member of the Phoenix College Bears basketball program in Phoenix, Arizona.

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Fielder to play in All-Star game
Congratulations to Hama’ya Fielder as she was one of the top 40 NJCAA players selected to participate in the 15th annual NJCAA Women’s Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) All-Star Weekend, July 20-23, at Clayton State University in Morrow, GA. Fielder, a rising sophomore with the Pearl River Community College Lady Wildcats basketball team, is a former standout with the Neshoba Central Lady Rockets basketball team. As a freshman at PRCC, she averaged 8.2 points, 2.5 rebounds, & 1.2 steals per game.

Lady Knights win Class 4A Championship
Congratulations to the West Lauderdale Lady Knights softball team as they defeated North Pike 11-0 to claim the 2023 MHSAA Class 4A State Softball Championship on Thursday, May 18, at the University of Southern Mississippi Softball Complex in Hattiesburg. Congratulations to team member Courtney Lewis, daughter of Shiela Frazier, on her & her team's accomplishments!

Lady Wolves Win First Ever National Championship
The Copiah-Lincoln Community College softball team entered the final day of the 2023 season knowing one thing... a familiar foe stood in their way from winning the first national championship in school history as they faced off against Jones College one final time. The Lady Wolves handed the Bobcats just their second shutout of the season winning, 7-0, on Saturday, May 27, in Spartanburg, S.C.

"What a day!!! I am so blessed & grateful to be a part of this team & program," stated Co-Lin head coach Meleah Howard. "To be a part of the first national championship in school history is a memory that will last a lifetime."

The Lady Wolves scored their first two runs in the top of the third as Zykeria Cole ( Magee) & Josie Meggs (Kosciusko) hit back-to-back singles to get the offense going. Cole then scored on an RBI single by Madison Moak (Brookhaven) while both Meggs & Moak advanced to third & second respectively. Meggs later scored on a wild pitch making the score, 2-0.

The Lady Wolves then exploded for another five-run inning against the Bobcats, their second in as many games, as Meggs hit a leadoff single then Moak drew a walk. Maddie Weeks (Clinton) drew another walk to load the bases. Then Abby Grace Richardson smashed a grand slam (her 24th home run of the season) to give the Lady Wolves a 6-0 lead.

Belle West (Byram) singled, took second on a wild pitch, advanced to third on a single by Faith Kivett (Tallulah, LA) & scored on a sacrifice bunt by Leia Phillips (Choctaw) making the score, 7-0.

The Bobcats got back-to-back singles in the bottom of the fifth, but a double play...

ECCC season ends at DII World Series
The East Central Community College Warriors concluded their extraordinary 2023 baseball season with a heartbreaking loss to the Frederick Community College Cougars, 11-10, at the NJCAA Division II World Series in Enid, Okla., on Sunday, May 28. Despite the loss, the Warriors had a remarkable journey that saw them earn both the MACCC & NJCAA Region 23 championships, finishing the season with 37 wins & 20 losses. Sophomore Ramie Harrison, a former standout with the Neshoba Central Rockets, was honored during the Region 23 Tournament as he was named MVP as he went 9-for-18 (.500 avg) with 4 doubles, 3 runs, 5 RBIs, 3 walks, & a stolen base.

see CHAMPS, pg 22
MUW Softball finishes as USCAA runner-up

In a magical run through the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) Softball Small College World Series, the Mississippi University for Women finally ran out of rabbits to pull from its hat versus No. 2-seed Penn State University-Brandywine, 10-9, in the championship game on Thursday, May 18, 2023, in DuBois, Penn.

The No. 9-seeded Owls (26-20) far-and-away exceeded expectations by the ranking committee, but certainly not of themselves.

The W team quickly won the hearts of fans at Heindl Stadium during the series, thanks to its effort and never being deterred by the situations. Perhaps the most remarkable "hurdle" cleared by MUW was that of having to play eight games just to reach the title game (conversely, PSUB played four total games to win its first USCAA crown).

"Wow, what a ride," Owls Head Coach Buddy Foster exclaimed afterwards. "This team, their grit and their dedication to one another was impressive to watch. Those student-athletes represented The W very well and we have felt the love from Columbus. We had so many outstanding performances throughout this week. I could go on and on. We walked off that field with our heads held high."

Thursday's finale was typical of Foster's assessment of how the Owls had battled all week. MUW trailed 3-0 after one inning and was down 4-2 through three. A single run in the fifth and two in the sixth put The W ahead, 5-4. But the Lions roared back with four in their half of the sixth to make it 8-5 heading into the final frame.

In the seventh, pinch-hitter Makalyn Cowley worked a leadoff walk, after the count went full. The very next batter, Riley Phillips, crushed her third home run of the year – all of Foster's assessment of how the Owls had battled all week. Playing all these games against the best competition in the country & we never backed down," added Howard. "Every single player on our team contributed in a major way all week & I am just so proud of every single one of them. I love them all & I am just so happy to be able to say that we are National Champions!"

Co-Lin finishes the season with a program record for wins at 49-10 overall in addition to winning the first Region 23 Championship since 2008.

The Bobcats (50-10) finished runner-up for the fifth time in as many years in the USCAA tourney – to cut the deficit to 8-7.

MUW not only went to the USCAA championships for the fifth time in as many years in the modern athletics era at The W, but established the school season record for victories at 26.

This year's NJCAA Division II Softball World Series featured former Choctaw Central Lady Warriors softball standout facing each other in the championship game. Congratulations to Co-Lin's Leia Phillips (left) & Jones College's 'Tia Rain Saunders on their accomplishments at their respective schools.

Congratulations to MUW Owls softball team member & former Choctaw Central Lady Warriors softball standout Maiya Joe on her recent achievements at MUW! Joe signed with MUW after two years with the Meridian Community College Lady Eagles softball program.
Alderman awarded 2023 Ferriss Trophy

Catcher/Outfielder Kemp Aldermen of the University of Mississippi won the 2023 Ferriss Trophy. The award, sponsored by the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Pearl River Resort, is given annually to the Most Outstanding College Baseball Player in Mississippi.

Alderman was presented the award at a luncheon held at the Pearl River Resort in Choctaw on Monday, May 22, 2023. He put together a strong season despite his team’s struggles. The junior out of Newton County Academy led his team in several offensive categories.

Alderman becomes the 19th Mississippi college player to receive the award named for former Major League star and Delta State coach, Dave “Boo” Ferriss.

The finalists and winner for this prestigious award are selected by a panel of coaches and professional scouts. Other finalists for the honor were Tanner Hall of Southern Miss, Ty Hill of Jackson State, Hunter Hines of Mississippi State, and Slade Wilks of Southern Miss.

The Ferriss Trophy is a part of the Outstanding Player Awards Series which also recognizes the top college athlete in football with the C Spire Conerly Trophy and the top college men’s and women’s basketball players with the Howell and Gillom Trophies presented by MBCI and Pearl River Resort.

CPD Releases Memorial Day Holiday Numbers

The Choctaw Police Department began the 2023 Memorial Day Holiday Travel Enforcement Period on Friday, May 26, at 12 a.m., & concluded on Monday, May 29, at 11:59 p.m.

Approximately 716 vehicles were checked, with 38 citations being issued - 22 for driver’s license required, 11 for driving under suspension, 3 for requirement of child restraint, 1 for registration tag required, 1 for unsafe vehicle, & at least 8 arrests. These numbers are only from the safety checkpoints & not from any other calls for service.

The public is reminded, per the Mississippi Department of Public Safety & Mississippi Driver Service Bureau, the Mobile ID (mID) currently serves as a companion to your physical ID, rather than a replacement. You can use it in any context you would normally use your driver license or state-issued ID to verify your identity, EXCEPT during traffic stops or boarding a plane. You should still keep your physical ID.

Per Tribal Code section 4-5-2, Driver’s License Required: any person who shall drive or operate a motor vehicle upon the public roadways of this jurisdiction shall be required to have in his possession at all times when operating a motor vehicle a driver’s license or similar permit valid under the laws of the jurisdiction from which it was issued, and shall display same upon demand by a police officer or a judge of the Tribal Court.

Violation of this section is a Class C offense; however, no person charged with violating this section shall be convicted if he produces in court a driver’s license heretofore issued to him, which was valid at the time of his arrest.
Appreciation Luncheon held for Dept. of Public Safety
On Thursday, May 18, 2023, an appreciation luncheon was held at the Smith John Justice Complex in Choctaw for our brave men & women at the Department of Public Safety. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben attended the luncheon & expressed his great appreciation for all their hard work & dedication. Thank you to the Department of Public Safety for all that you do for our Tribal members, Tribal employees & guests on Choctaw Tribal lands!

Department of Public Safety Promotions
Congratulations to members of the MBCI Department of Public Safety who were recently promoted to their new positions. Pictured, from left to right, are: Lou Alex, Lieutenant/Training Officer; Rodgrick Anderson, Operations Captain; Christopher Evans, Sr., Deputy Director; Josh Denson, Corporal; Dwight McMillan, Corporal; DeMarquis Wilson, Corporal; Erwin Thomas, Sergeant, Choctaw Wildlife & Parks/Animal Control; Kevin Solomon, Supervisor, 911 Dispatch Services; & Joanne Hickman, Supervisor, Uniform Patrol (Security). Not pictured is Shaun Jimmie, Corporal.

New Recruits Answer the Call
Firefighter Brandis T. Johnson of the Choctaw Fire Department is making a difference as he graduated on May 25, 2023, as part of Class 203 of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 1001 Firefighter I-II course, held at the Mississippi State Fire Academy in Jackson.

This intense seven-week course includes online, classroom, & hands-on instruction in the areas of fire behavior, fire suppression, rescue, incident command, hazardous materials, & other fire related topics. This course meets & exceeds the NFPA for Firefighter Qualifications & the uniform minimum training standards stated in the Mississippi Code section 45-11-7.

The Mississippi State Fire Academy is a division of the Mississippi Insurance Department. State Fire Marshal Mike Chaney & Academy Executive Director Terry Wages conclude that firefighters, through their newly acquired skills & knowledge, will be an asset to the fire departments they represent.

“We are excited to introduce our newest group of certified MS Firefighters that will be tasked with protecting our communities all across our great state.” said Director Wages.

Important Notice about Speed Enforcement
The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Department of Public Safety reminds the public about Choctaw Tribal Code, Title IV Traffic Offenses, section 4-4-11, Speed Limits.

Officers of the Choctaw Police Department successfully completed a course of instruction & demonstrated competency in the principles & operation of moving & stationary Doppler Radar to operate in the use of radar to determine velocity of motor vehicles.

Officers have the technology installed in their patrol units & will be capable of enforcing the speed laws of the Tribe. Effective June 1, 2023, officers will issue traffic citations for speeding.

LIVING WATER
LOCATED IN THE TUCKER COMMUNITY
(Adjacent up the hill from Tucker Elementary School)
We invite you and your family to join our family for services.
SUNDAY SERVICES - 2:00 pm
TUESDAY EVENINGS - 6:00 pm

Gone & Worship with us
Macedonia Baptist Church
130 Campus Drive
Conehatta, MS 39057

SUNDAY SCHEDULE
10:00 a.m. Sunday School
11:00 a.m. Worship Service
5:00 p.m. Evening Service
1st Sunday Service 4:00 p.m.
Pastor: Rev. Samuel Dixon

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE
6:00 p.m. Pray Meeting
6:30 p.m. Discipleship/ Family Ministry Class

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

John 8:31-32
IN MEMORIAM

INFANT KYRENE DASAN DAVIS

Funeral service for Khyreen Dusan Davis, 2 month old infant, was held on Saturday, May 6, 2023, at the Pearl River Community Center.

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

Infant Davis passed away on April 21 at the Choctaw Health Center in Choctaw.

Despite his short time on Earth, he was loved & brought immense joy to the family.

He was preceded in death by his aunt, Noranna Davis.

Survivors include his parents, Maria Davis & Courtney Coleman; sister, Sakari Davis; twin brother, Bailey Davis; grandparents, Vivian Ben & James Davis, & Mary Helen Coleman; 3 aunts, 3 uncles, & a host of relatives.

IYANA KAILAN ANDERSON

Funeral service for Iyana Kailan Anderson, 19, was held on Friday, May 5, 2023, at the Tucker Community Gymnasium. Minister Curtis Willis, Sr. & Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.

Burial was in Holy Rosary Catholic Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Miss. Anderson passed away on April 24 in Moore Haven, Florida.

She enjoyed texting & talking on her phone, playing sports, being with family & friends, cooking, baking, traveling, & listening to pow wow songs with her family.

She is preceded in death by her aunt, Hailey Willis; & great-grandparents, Roger & Sarina Anderson, Freeman & Elizabeth Allen, Nancy Chickaway Willis & Robert Steve, & Delphia I. Willis & Gordon G. Willis.

Survivors include her parents, Kelly Willis, Jaric & Rakisha Anderson; sisters, Sereney Anderson, Greatone Ben, Zeta Ben, Jahzara Smith, Kamilla Smith, & Harper Anderson; brothers, Jaric Anderson, Jr., Princeton Anderson, & Kroy Anderson; grandparents, James D. & Dollianne Willis, & Ricky Anderson, Sr., & Trina Jim; & a host of aunts, uncles, relatives, & friends.

SHIRLEY ANN MARTIN BERG

Funeral service for Shirley Ann Martin Berg, 65, was held on Saturday, April 29, 2023, at McClain-Hays Chapel in Philadelphia. Rev. Steven Lockley officiated. McClain-Hays Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Berg passed away on April 26 at her residence.

A lifelong resident of Neshoba County, Miss., she graduated from Philadelphia High School in 1976. She also graduated from East Central Community College, & later Mississippi State University in 2004, where she received her business degree. In her early years, she was an office manager for Choctaw Health Center's Behavioral Health, then later a manager of the Choctaw Federal Credit Union.

"Mama Shirley" was a proud wife & mother, but most of all "Mamo". Her passion included helping others & making this world a better place. The spirit of giving was instilled in her children. She was married to the love of her life for 30 years. She enjoyed being with her family, & when she had the chance, she traveled the world.

She supported her favorite high school basketball teams, especially when her great-nieces or nephews were playing.

She was preceded in death by her parents, Edmund & Evelyn Martin; daughter, Yolonda T. Boler; son, Ian Berg; granddaughter, T’Kendall Boler; & brothers, Edwin Martin, Fred Martin & Jeffery Sockey.

Survivors include her husband, Brian C. Berg; daughters, Jacobi Anne Berg (Harry) & Taloa Grace Berg; sons, Moreno O’Neal Boler (Reene) & James Michael Robinson (Jessica); 6 grandchildren; sisters, Beatrice Carson (Ron) & Diana Ben (Greg); brother, Richard Sockey (Marion); & a host of nieces & nephews.

GARTH DEWAYNE CHARLIE, JR.

Funeral service for Garth Dewayne Charlie, Jr., 38, was held on Monday, May 8, 2023, at Macedon Baptist Church in Conehatta. Deacon Billy Smith & Rev. Samuel Dixon officiated.

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

Mr. Charlie passed away on May 2 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

He resided in the Conehatta community & enjoyed being with family, grilling, fishing, fixing cars, playing washers, & playing with the Koni Hata Stickball team.

He is preceded in death by his father, Garth Dewayne Charlie, Sr.; grandparents, Thomas Ray Charlie & Necie King, Dewey G. Thomas & Georgia L. Thomas; an aunt, 2 uncles, & a nephew.

Survivors include his mother, Dyranah Thomas; daughters, Kanneisha Charlie, Tanneisha Charlie, & Lakeriyah Charlie; sons, Carson Charlie, Casen Charlie, & Dyonta Charlie;

see OBITUARIES, pg. 26
sisters, Cassandra Williamson, Dylana Charlie, Gayle Charlie, & Tica Charlie; brother, Gordon Charlie; special companion, Delia Williamson; special friend (brother), John Thomas; 4 aunts, 5 uncles, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**DANITA LEATRICE MCMILLAN**

Funeral service for Danita Leatrice McMillan, 42, was held on Thursday, May 11, 2023, at Tucker Community Gymnasium. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Charles Doby officiated.

Burial was in the Holy Rosary Catholic Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. McMillan passed away away on May 6 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Meridian. A resident of the Bogue Chitto community, she attended Bogue Chitto Baptist Church. He attained his GED & was employed with Choctaw Transit then with Pearl River Resort in the Receiving Department. He loved being with family, attending Florida State Seminole football games, traditional social dancing, & watching Choctaw stickball games on YouTube.

He is preceded in death by his parents, John Levi Bell, Sr. & Maxine Thompson Bell; sisters, Sally Bell & Elizabeth Allen; & brothers, Bennie Bell & Lawrence Bell. Survivors include his wife, Glenda Bell; daughter, Tenecia Bell; son, Jaylen Bell; sister, Dorothy Bell Wilson; brother, Ramon Agurrie; & a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, & friends.

**JOHN LEVI BELL, JR.**

Funeral service for John Levi Bell Jr., 47, was held on Wednesday, May 17, 2023, at Bogue Chitto Community Gymnasium. Deacon Randy Jim & Rev. Charles Doby officiated.

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

Mr. Bell passed away on May 12 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian. A resident of the Bogue Chitto community, he attended Bogue Chitto Baptist Church. He attained his GED & was employed with Choctaw Transit then with Pearl River Resort in the Receiving Department. He loved being with family, attending Florida State Seminole football games, traditional social dancing, & watching Choctaw stickball games on YouTube.

He is preceded in death by his parents, John Levi Bell, Sr. & Maxine Thompson Bell; sisters, Sally Bell & Elizabeth Allen; & brothers, Bennie Bell & Lawrence Bell. Survivors include his wife, Glenda Bell; daughter, Tenecia Bell; son, Jaylen Bell; sister, Dorothy Bell Wilson; brother, Ramon Agurrie; & a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, & friends.

**MARCELLA BEN VAUGHN**

Funeral service for Marcelia Ben Vaughn, 83, was held on Thursday, May 18, 2023, at Hope Indian Baptist Church in Pearl River. Deacon Williamson Isaac & Rev. Travis Willis officiated.

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

Ms. Vaughn passed away on May 15 at her granddaughter's residence in Pell City, Alabama.

Her roots were embedded in the Pearl River community & later relocated to Carthage, Miss., as she raised two sons, Ollie “Bruce” Vaughn & Kevin Edwards. She was also a foster parent & provided a loving home.

She attended Choctaw Central until the eighth grade then transferred to Chilocco Indian School in Oklahoma, where she earned her high school diploma. She obtained a Bachelor of Science in Education from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1971, thus beginning a remarkable 43-year teaching & administrative career serving the Choctaw people through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

She was also a consultant for McGraw-Hill Publishing Company as she had a pivotal role in implementing the English as a Second Language program, which helped tribal children adapt to the English language. She retired in 2008.

She enjoyed cooking, selling traditional crafts at the Choctaw Indian Fair, Sudoku puzzles, beading, sewing, making quilts, & browsing at Thrifty Nickel. She prepared meals for sick relatives & helped those in need within the community.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Alford Isom & Lelia Jean Shoemake; & sisters, Evelyn Shoemake & Lorianna Shoemake. Survivors include her wife, Shalisa Isom; daughters, Denissa Isom, Trinesa Isom Barojas, & Sharandon Isom; sons, Rockky Isom, Derald Isom, Gerald Isom, Jr., Bilie Isom, & Germaine Isom; step-children, Ariyana Thomas & Aleric Thomas; sister, Barbarella Isom; step-brother, Alvin Isom; special brother, Ray Crimm; 15 grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**GERALD WAYNE ISOM, SR.**

Funeral service for Gerald Wayne Isom, Sr., 55, was held on Friday, May 19, 2023, at Macedonia Indian Baptist Church in Conehatta. Deacon Billy Smith & Bro. Brian Parkman officiated.

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

Mr. Isom passed away on May 15 at his residence.

He lived most of his life in Conehatta & attended Choctaw Central High School. He enjoyed being with family & friends, playing washers, telling jokes, working on vehicles, & watching 49ers football games on TV.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Alford Isom & Lelia Jean Shoemake; & sisters, Evelyn Shoemake & Lorianna Shoemake. Survivors include his wife, Shalisa Isom; daughters, Denissa Isom, Trinesa Isom Barojas, & Sharandon Isom; sons, Rockky Isom, Derald Isom, Gerald Isom, Jr., Bilie Isom, & Germaine Isom; step-children, Ariyana Thomas & Aleric Thomas; sister, Barbarella Isom; step-brother, Alvin Isom; special brother, Ray Crimm; 15 grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.
Linda Charlene Mingo Gibson

Funeral service for Linda Charlene Mingo Gibson, 59, was held on Wednesday, May 24, 2023, at Standing Pine Community Gymnasium. Bro. Joseph Wesley officiated.

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

Ms. Gibson passed away on May 21 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

A 2003 Choctaw Central High School graduate, he enjoyed hunting, fishing, & being with family & friends. He was employed with the Youth Opportunity Program & was also a basketball referee. He enjoyed telling stories & making people laugh.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Patrick & Nuga Gibson Twiss, Roger Dale & Annie Thomas; stepfather, Larin Thomas; a sister, Kenetra Thomas; a brother, Baby Kendrick; 2 aunts & 3 great-aunts.

Survivors include his wife, Mindee Gibson; daughter, Kaymeree Faith Gibson; mother, Priscella Twiss; father, Kenneth Thomas; sisters, LeAnna Charlie, LoriAnna Thomas, Delia Gibson, Lakeisha Thomas, Melanie Willis, Shalisa Isom, Kylin Jim, Christina Kenaye Willis, Ashleigh Thomas, Brooke Thomas, & Alyssa Thomas; brothers, Jordan Jim, Gabriel Thomas, Davion Thomas, Brett Thomas, Kendall Ben, Rogerick Thomas, Kyle Jim, & Kyson Jim; a special niece, Analissa Perez; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Keith Davion Gibson

Funeral service for Keith Davion Gibson, 37, was held on Saturday, May 27, 2023, at Bogue Chitto Community Gymnasium. Rev. Robert Patrick officiated.

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

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

Mr. Gibson was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Gibson passed away on May 21 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

A 2003 Choctaw Central High School graduate, he enjoyed hunting, fishing, & being with family & friends. He was employed with the Youth Opportunity Program & was also a basketball referee. He enjoyed telling stories & making people laugh.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Patrick & Nuga Gibson Twiss, Roger Dale & Annie Thomas; stepfather, Larin Thomas; a sister, Kenetra Thomas; a brother, Baby Kendrick; 2 aunts & 3 great-aunts.

Survivors include his wife, Mindee Gibson; daughter, Kaymeree Faith Gibson; mother, Priscella Twiss; father, Kenneth Thomas; sisters, LeAnna Charlie, LoriAnna Thomas, Delia Gibson, Lakeisha Thomas, Melanie Willis, Shalisa Isom, Kylin Jim, Christina Kenaye Willis, Ashleigh Thomas, Brooke Thomas, & Alyssa Thomas; brothers, Jordan Jim, Gabriel Thomas, Davion Thomas, Brett Thomas, Kendall Ben, Rogerick Thomas, Kyle Jim, & Kyson Jim; a special niece, Analissa Perez; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Wynema Williams-Mingo

Funeral service for Wynema Williams Mingo, 49, was held on Sunday, May 28, 2023, at Macedonia Baptist Church in Conehatta. Deacon Marco Patrick & Rev. Robert Patrick officiated.

Funeral service for Wynema Williams Mingo, 49, was held on Sunday, May 28, 2023, at Macedonia Baptist Church in Conehatta. Deacon Marco Patrick & Rev. Robert Patrick officiated.

Mr. Amos passed away on May 31 at Jackson General Hospital in Jackson, TN.

He was a farm hand for over 30 years & loved being outdoors, doing yard work, fixing things, & being with his grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Bobo Thompson, Sr. & Vina Thompson; & a brother, Paul Thompson.

He is survived by his wife, Melissa Thompson; daughter, Kimberly Ray (Wes) of Ripley, TN; sisters, Janie O’Kelley (Neal) of Brighton, TN, Loretta Wilkins (Mike) of Holly Springs, MS, & Nannette Thompson (Micheal) of West Point, KY; a brother, Bobby Willis (Carla) of Ripley, TN; 5 grandchildren; a crazy cat he loved dearly, Bubbles; & a host of nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, relatives, & friends.

Harold Lee Amos

Funeral service for Harold Lee Amos, 66, was held on Thursday, June 1, 2023, at Pearl River Community Center. Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

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

Mr. Amos passed away on May 25 at South Central Medical Center in Laurel.

He was a U.S. Marine Corps veteran & was employed with Bok Homa Casino Security. He enjoyed playing stickball with Bok Cito, baseball, watching his favorite TV shows, & listening to music.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Tom Amos & Maggie Frazier Billie; son, Bruce Cody Thompson; sisters, Glenda Billie & Charlene Amos; & brothers, Wilson Billie, Jr., Jimmy Billie, Leroy Billie, AC Amos, Davis Lee Amos, & Charles Amos.

Survivors include his daughter, Rebecca Blonco; sisters, Patsy Martin, Manzie Billie, Linda Clemmons, & Fannie Amos; 2 grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Bobo Thompson, Jr.

Funeral service for Bobo Thompson, Jr., 58, was held on Sunday, June 4, 2023, at the Henning, TN Facility Building. Burial was in Henning Community Cemetery.

Mr. Thompson passed away on May 31 at Jackson General Hospital in Jackson, TN.

He was a farm hand for over 30 years & loved being outdoors, doing yard work, fixing things, & being with his grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Bobo Thompson, Sr. & Vina Thompson; & a brother, Paul Thompson.

He is survived by his wife, Melissa Thompson; daughter, Kimberly Ray (Wes) of Ripley, TN; sisters, Janie O’Kelley (Neal) of Brighton, TN, Loretta Wilkins (Mike) of Holly Springs, MS, & Nannette Thompson (Micheal) of West Point, KY; a brother, Bobby Willis (Carla) of Ripley, TN; 5 grandchildren; a crazy cat he loved dearly, Bubbles; & a host of nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, relatives, & friends.
Beaver Dam Wins State Games Kabotcha Toli Gold

The Beaver Dam youth stickball team (ages 9-12) claimed this year’s gold medals in the State Games of Mississippi Kabotcha Toli stickball tournament as they defeated Bok Cito 7-1 on Saturday, June 10, 2023, at Warrior Stadium in Choctaw.

Beaver Dam’s Ladainian Isom was named MVP of the tournament.

Bok Cito received silver medals and Koni Osi claimed bronze medals with a 6-0 victory over Itibatoli in the consolation contest.

Nine teams participated in the tournament that ran from June 7-10.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Pearl River Resort are Gold Sponsors for the State Games of Mississippi, which is in its 32nd year.

Congratulations to Beaver Dam’s Ladainian Isom as he was named MVP!