Groundbreaking for New Boys & Girls Club Teen Center

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians recently hosted a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Boys and Girls Club Teen Center in the Pearl River Community. Once opened, this new facility will replace the current facility, which serves Tribal youth ages 12-18.

“The main thing we’re here for are these kids,” said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. “They need the space, and the opportunity came to us. I am glad that, along with the Tribal Council, all Boys and Girls Club staff, and with the help of Construction Management, we were able to facilitate something that will be here for future generations.”

The new facility will be a 11,020 square-foot steel building with a standing seam metal roof. The front half of the building will be for administrative and functional purposes: four offices, a conference/training room, restrooms, kitchen/concession area, storage and up to six

see BROADBAND, pg. 8

Tribe Receives Grant to Develop Workforce Training Center

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo announced the Department’s Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded a $5.8 million grant to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians for the construction of the Advanced Workforce Training Center. This grant is funded by the American Rescue Plan’s Indigenous Communities Program.

“Workforce development is a primary focus for our Tribe,” said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. “We have undertaken many projects to help our community members prepare to face a challenging and ever-evolving job market. This Workforce Training Center is a key component of our strategy to increase the skills of our Tribal members, whether they choose a career on or outside of our Tribal lands.”

The Center will be in the Pearl River community and will be approximately

see WORKFORCE, pg. 7

Tribe, MaxxSouth Broadband Partner to Expand Broadband Access

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians is growing its partnership with MaxxSouth Broadband, whereby their existing broadband system is being expanded to serve over 2,000 tribal homes in six of the eight Tribal communities.

Earlier this year, the Tribe announced that it had received an $8.43 million Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) grant award from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) that will provide funding for much needed internet access across Choctaw Tribal communities. The funding from the grant award will be used in part towards the Tribe’s partnership with MaxxSouth Broadband.

“With many school, business and service operations now being conducted online, the need for broadband internet access is more important than ever,” said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. “Access to adequate internet service in some Choctaw Tribal communities is limited at best. We

see BROADBAND, pg. 8

Contractors are currently in several Tribal communities connecting broadband wiring & fiber optics to provide access for 650MB/sec broadband service by MaxxSouth Broadband.
Halito!

The temperatures are cooling down, and we all are looking forward to the fall activities that take place during this time of the year. Volleyball, cross country and football seasons have concluded, and winter sports, such as basketball and soccer, have begun.

It has been my honor to visit our Tribal and local area schools to congratulate our students, whether they were selected to their school’s homecoming court or receiving recognition as seniors in the sports that they play. It’s always wonderful to see our students succeeding, and I want them to know we are very proud of them.

To be recognized as the 2022 Citizen of the Year by the Philadelphia-Neshoba County Community Development Partnership meant so much to me. The official award was presented during their annual banquet on Monday, September 26, 2022, at the Neshoba County Coliseum.

I was proud to have my family members, Tribal Council representatives, our 2022-2023 Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Raine Nickey, and Tribal and Pearl River Resort officials on hand to celebrate this recognition with me.

It was truly a great honor to be recognized by fellow citizens and leaders of my home county. Neshoba County, and the Pearl River Community, specifically, is where I have always called home, and my family and I are very proud to be part of this great community.

I commend each staff member of the Boys and Girls Club and all volunteers for making this year’s Day for Kids on Saturday, September 17 a successful one. It was great watching our youth having fun and seeing the smiles on their faces as they enjoyed a day of great activities. Congratulations on a job well done!

The Choctaw Elderly Activity Center hosted their American Indian Day Princess and Brave Pageant on Thursday, September 22. I was honored to be in attendance and to crown the winners. Congratulations to Princess Anita McCombs and Brave Larry Bell and great job to all the participants!

The Choctaw Tribal Schools celebrated American Indian Week with different cultural activities each day. It was wonderful to see our cultural regalia on display throughout the American Indian Day pageants that took place at each campus. I applaud each student who participated in these pageants and showcased their pride in their culture. Congratulations to all the winners!

On behalf of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, I extend our sincere congratulations to Tribal member Rhonda Harjo (MBCI/Mvskoke Nation) and the 15 other Tribal leaders from around the country who were appointed to serve on the newly created Tribal Advisory Council at the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO).

Ms. Harjo is a former Deputy Chief Counsel for the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. It was my honor to nominate her to this role. When I heard about this Tribal Advisory Council, I knew we needed to make sure a Chahta had a seat at the table, thereby giving us a voice in the room. Someone not just from our Tribe, but someone who knew Indian Country.

Rhonda has both the...
Competition

Weavers Win Business Plan

Congratulations to Josh & Zach Weaver as they were winners of the Fast Start Program’s Business Plan Competition. The program, hosted by the MBCI Office of Economic Development’s Small Business Program, offers Tribal member entrepreneurs an opportunity to gain valuable information & assistance in starting their own business. At the end of the six-week course, entrepreneurs who developed a detailed plan were entered into a Business Plan Competition with the winner receiving $1,000 to invest into their venture. Pictured above, Chief Ben (center) presented the check to Josh & Zach Weaver & congratulated them on their achievement.

Obeid’s Food Mart Opens in Bogue Chitto

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held for the grand opening of Obeid’s Food Mart on Monday, Oct. 24, in the Bogue Chitto Community. Located at the former Big Creek General Store, store owner & Tribal member Onnie Obeid, along with her husband, have over 15 years experience owning & operating a convenience store for our children/youth.

The winning plan was developed by first place winners Josh & Zach Weaver, pictured above with MBCI President & CEO Sandy Balderas. The plan will help us be able to move forward in being better able to provide the best future possible for our children/youth. I want to thank the Resort Planning Team, which included tribal member management team members, for their work on the planning and presentation of the project, the CRDE Board and the Tribal Council in their important support on the future of our Tribe. I look forward to sharing more information with you as we continue important progress on our Tribal lands.

In addition to the above-mentioned Crystal Ridge project, there are other projects moving forward or soon beginning. I’m proud of the fact that we are still able to achieve progress across our Tribal lands despite the challenges we have faced in the past few years. My continued prayers are for peace and prosperity for our Tribe, our businesses, and our members and employees.

Chi Yakokilih,
Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief
CTS Read Aloud Events
Numerous individuals took part in this year’s Read Aloud Month activities in the local Choctaw Tribal Schools. Among those to participate were Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Nickey. Although speaking to your child about all kinds of things is good for their language development, reading does more. When you read aloud together, you build up your child’s “word bank” of vocabulary they know. You also introduce them to formal grammar & sentence structures (which might not be as apparent in our day-to-day conversation.) By reading consistently to a child, you improve their readiness to learn & give them the basic literacy skills to succeed in school. Some of the benefits of reading aloud include: language development; literacy skill building; instilling a love of reading; brain development; knowledge gained & shared; & personal bonding.

Head Start Awareness Month  Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben signed a proclamation declaring the month of October as Head Start Awareness Month. Children & staff members from the Pearl River Headstart Center, DOECE Princess Amara Bell & Brave Kreedon Dixon, & DOECE officials were present for the proclamation signing.

Congressman
Guest Visits SPES
U.S. Representative Michael Guest visited Standing Pine Elementary School (SPES) on Monday, Oct. 31, to participate in Read Aloud Month activities for the students. Congressman Guest was invited by SPES instructor Callie Bowman as students & faculty were honored for the visit. Chief Ben presented Congressman Guest a Choctaw basket as a token of his appreciation for his visit & continuous support of the MBCI. Standing Pine Tribal Council member Loriann Ahshapanek & SPES Principal Linda Peoples also offered their gratitude for the visit.
Chief Ben Honored by MC During 2022 Homecoming

Mississippi College alumnus Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben was honored as one of two alumni to receive the Order of the Golden Arrow at Mississippi College’s Homecoming Brunch on Saturday, October 29, 2022, in Clinton.

The other honoree, Joy Fain Dowdle ’02, ’05, is a summa cum laude graduate with highest honors at MC and a summa cum laude graduate of the Law School. She is a partner in the Litigation Department of Paul Hastings, based in the firm’s Houston, Texas, office, and vice chair of the firm’s Lifesciences and Healthcare practice.

The Order of the Golden Arrow honors individuals, alumni, or friends of the University who have made outstanding personal or professional achievements in their professions, businesses, or careers. It recognizes exceptional performance or leadership beyond the ordinary.

Chief Ben ’01, a member of the varsity football squad while at MC, is the fifth – and youngest – democratically elected chief of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. A lifelong resident of Neshoba County, Ben was officially sworn into office on July 9, 2019. He is guided in his leadership and service to the Choctaw people by five key initiatives: respect of others; fairness and equity to all; accountability in all areas; efficiency in practices; and support and appreciation of all employees and tribal members.

Choctaws throughout Mississippi turn to Ben for the careful education and mentoring of their children and strong, thoughtful guidance of their community.

“Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben played football at MC and has a deep love for the college. We are very proud of his accomplishments, and we are excited to connect with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. It’s quite fitting that he would also receive this award,” said Jim Turcotte, vice president and executive director of alumni affairs at MC.

During a July visit by administrative leaders to Tribal lands in Neshoba County, MC President Blake Thompson and Ben signed a memorandum of understanding that solidified the Christian University’s special relationship with the only federally recognized American Indian tribe in Mississippi.

The MOU created a valuable tuition assistance program for Choctaw students, and established an expanded cultural exchange between MC and the MBCI. MC will host MBCI students and leaders on the Clinton campus for cultural exchange and educational programs designed to address the academic interests of MBCI members and their descendants.

“We worked on and completed the MOU with the hope that we can build a relationship that includes expanding the education of Choctaw history and culture to the faculty, staff, and students at Mississippi College,” said Ben.

He attended East Central Community College in Decatur before visiting MC.

“Mississippi College had a great educational reputation,” he said. “I always pushed myself academically, and so it ended up being a great fit. I made some great friends and, of course, received a wonderful education.

He was elected Tribal Chief about the same time as Thompson became MC’s 20th president.

“We both have made an effort to build a relationship between the Tribe and school, and I look forward to building a lasting connection between the two,” Ben said.

“It is my hope that the MOU will not only help MC students, faculty, and alumni develop a better understanding and appreciation for our tribe, our culture, and our heritage, but help facilitate that understanding and appreciation to others within our state and country.”

Ben said he has great respect for those who have been recognized as recipients of the Order of the Golden Arrow at MC.

“To be honored side-by-side with those before me is a wonderful feeling,” he said. “I like to say that I am Choctaw by blood and Choctaw by education. I am a proud member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and now a proud member of the Golden Arrow honorees.”
**MC Introduces New Athletic Logo, Refreshed Brand Mark**

Mississippi College Homecoming attendees may have noticed an enhanced version of the University’s iconic brand mark and a vibrant new athletic logo.

The traditional MC letters received a nuanced adjustment, with clean, symmetrical lines, sharp, thin edges, and a more modern look. The new colors are a richer version of the beloved blue and gold.

The athletic logo is more striking: a stylized profile of an eagle – an important animal in the culture of the Choctaw people – adorned with feathers modeled after those prominently displayed in the crowns of Choctaw Indian Princesses. The feathers are offset by diamond shapes commonly found in handmade jewelry or woven baskets crafted by Choctaw artisans.

The refreshed look, part of a new branding initiative at the 197-year-old Christian University, is intended to appeal to a new generation of students, according to Nick Stafford, director of marketing at MC.

“The rebrand is reflective of changes that are happening at the operations level of the University. We’re growing and striving to reach the next generation. We want to take strategic steps to reflect those changes that speak to that generation of students,” Stafford said.

The new branding initiative will also apply to the MC School of Law campus in downtown Jackson.

Homecoming presented the perfect opportunity to unveil the design changes because it represented the largest gathering of current and former faculty, staff, students, families, and friends of the University.

“It’s important for our alums to see this rebrand because it’s the next evolution of something their lives are tied to. It’s the next step on the ladder that reaches generations,” said Stafford.

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CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

Choctaw Economic Development Website wins IEDC Award

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The International Economic Development Council (IEDC), the largest nonprofit professional association to professional economic developers in the world, has selected recipients of its 2022 Excellence Awards. Recognized each year during the IEDC Annual Conference, the awards honor organizations for exemplary economic development marketing campaigns, projects, & programs. Twenty-five award categories honor organizations & individuals for their efforts in creating positive change in urban, suburban, & rural communities.

The MBCI Economic Development website, URL mbschoctawbusiness.com, won a Silver Award in the General Purpose Website category.

“Communities need our profession now more than ever. This year’s awardees exemplify the ingenuity, leadership, & determination needed to meet the challenges of today & the future. The winners of IEDC’s Excellence in Economic Development awards represent the best of economic development & demonstrate the level of leadership that our profession strives for every day,” shared IEDC President & CEO Nathan Ohle.

“This year’s awards selection process was especially competitive. We are honored to recognize the more than 100 communities whose marketing submissions, projects, & partnerships have improved regional quality of life,” added IEDC Awards Advisory Committee Chair Christina Winn.

Awards are judged by a diverse panel of economic & community developers from around the world. IEDC received over 500 submissions from the U.S. & four additional countries around the world.

BROADBAND .................................................................................................................. continued from page one

50,000 square feet. It will provide vocational and technical training to existing MBCI employees, local employers, middle and high school students, and Boys & Girls Club members.

“We have developed a long-term strategy to strengthen the Choctaw workforce, which is essential to successful economic development,” said Economic Development Director John Hendrix. “This new facility will enable us to provide advanced skills training, including vocational skills such as electrical, HVAC, and industrial maintenance. We will also offer training in computer and digital skills, healthcare, and management. The Center will also support Choctaw entrepreneurs with a small business development center with a maker space and incubator.”

Raimondo stated, “This EDA investment will facilitate hands-on training for the Choctaws in a modern, innovative space, creating new economic opportunity in the region.”

WORKFORCE .................................................................................................. continued from page one
The following ordinances & resolutions were submitted to the Choctaw Tribal Council for consideration. Listed is a brief summary & action taken.

SPECIAL CALL MEETING AUGUST 31, 2022

RESOLUTION CHO 22-110, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Department of Family & Community Services to apply for funding through the Family Violence Prevention & Services Program from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Family Violence Prevention & Services Program provides support of emergency shelter & related assistance for victims of domestic violence & their children. For more information, please contact the Department of Family & Community Services.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-111, amending Resolution CHO 22-039 which authorized the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Office of Economic Development to apply for funds from the State Small Business Credit Initiative (“SSBCI”) Program, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The MBCI will now submit a joint application with other Tribes for the SSBCI funding to access additional funding & to share administrative capacity for the programs available under the SSBCI funding & designates the Cherokee Nation as the implementing entity. For more information, please contact the Office of Economic Development.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-112, approving the revised 2022-2023 budget for the Choctaw Tribal Schools, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: For more information, please contact the Department of Schools.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-113, approving a revised list of administrative positions with updated weighted factor compensation differentials for the Department of Schools, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Department of Schools’ administrative positions with responsibilities, credentials, & leadership roles that are eligible for a weighted factor compensation differential include: (1) Director of Schools; (2) Assistant Director; (3) High School Principal; (4) Pearl River Elementary Principal; (5) Elementary Principals; (6) Assistant Principals; (7) Choctaw Virtual Learning Center Administrator; (8) Choctaw Technical Education Center Administrator; (9) Federal Programs/Title I Coordinator; (10) Special Education Coordinator; (11) Curriculum Coordinator; (12) District Administrator Coach; & (13) Data Management Coordinator. For more information, please contact the Department of Schools.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-114, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Choctaw Tribal Court, Court Services, to apply for & accept the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) from the U.S. Department of Justice, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: In FY 2020, the JAG provided Court Services a direct allocation in the amount of $22,799. In FY 2021, the JAG provided Court Services a direct allocation in the amount of $27,671. In FY 2022, the JAG awarded Court Services $23,492 which will be used for training for staff & purchasing Adobe Acrobat Pro. For more information, please contact Court Services.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-115, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to accept grant funding from the Tides Foundation, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Tides Foundation awarded Choctaw Tribal Courts grant funding in the amount of $55,000 to be utilized by the Choctaw Peace-making Court. For more information, please contact Choctaw Tribal Courts.

TEEN CENTER

Classrooms, with some of the classrooms allowing flexibility to become a large space for dining or other functions.

The rear of the building will be an open gymnasium with basketball goals, sleeves for volleyball, and space for many more activities. A space off from the gym kitchen will provide ample and easily accessible storage for tables, chairs, supplies, and dry goods.

The kitchen equipment is like the ones in the recently constructed community CERF buildings, but there will be a walk-in cooler to allow for more efficient purchasing, storage, and distribution of perishable items to the various Boys and Girls Club locations.

Costs associated with the site development and engineering for the project were donated by Morton Construction and Willis Engineering. Building design was developed by Yates Construction, LLC at no cost.

Construction on the new Teen Center began immediately after the groundbreaking ceremony and is scheduled to be completed in June 2023.

RIGHT, Teen Club members look over the plans for their new Teen Center, scheduled for completion next June.
SPECIAL CALL MEETING SEPTEMBER 9, 2022

RESOLUTION CHO 22-116, authorizing a distribution of Tribal funds, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-117, approving Fiscal Year 2023 Operating & Capital Budgets for the Choctaw Ordinance 56 Tribal Enterprises, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-118, expanding gaming operations & to designate a resort area in the Crystal Ridge Community of the Choctaw Indian Reservation, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-119, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to apply for funding from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-120(B), authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to accept a donation from MacKenzie Scott & to designate a site in the Pearl River Community for a Boys & Girls Club Teen Center, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-121(B), rescinding Resolution CHO 180-94 & Resolution CHO 74-95 & to designate a site in the Pearl River Community for Community Ball Fields, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-122, approving a Memorandum of Understanding between Applied Research Associates, Inc. & the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) for the Community Resilience Planning Disaster Recovery Project, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-123, approving a Commercial Land Assignment between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians d/b/a Choctaw Shopping Center Enterprise & Onnie Strickland d/b/a Obeid’s Food Mart, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-124, approving a Commercial Land Assignment between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians d/b/a Choctaw Shopping Center Enterprise & Kendall Wallace d/b/a Kuntry Boy Designs, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-125, approving a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians & the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA), was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-126, amending Section XII. of the Administrative Personnel Policy & Procedures, was ADOPTED - 17 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-127, amending Resolution CHO 74-95 to designate a site in the Pearl River Community for Community Ball Fields that will be administered & maintained by MBCI. For more information, please contact the Office of the Attorney General.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-128, approving a Commercial Land Assignment between the Choctaw Shoppin...
RESOLUTIONS ................................................................................................................................. continued from page nine

RESOLUTION CHO 22-127, approving Fiscal Year 2023 budgets for Tribal Administration, Programs, Agencies & Operations, was ADOPTED - 15 YES (L. Ahshapaneck, M. Briscoe, C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, R. Isaac, S. Johnson, D. Martin, W. McMillan, H. Nickey, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, K. Wallace, & K. Wesley); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT (D. Mingo & Timothy Thomas, Sr.).

SUMMARY: The FY 2023 budget includes one (1) incentive payment of $850.00, before tax withholdings, to all eligible Government Services employees who participate in the Tribe’s Employee Benefit Program as of October 1, 2022 & who continue employment through January 5, 2023, except those: (1) who are covered by an approved compensation or pay plan; or (2) whose positions received a Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) in the fiscal year 2023 budget; or (3) whose positions received a merit increase in the fiscal year 2023 budget; or (4) who are on disciplinary probation or suspension between October 1, 2022 & January 5, 2023. The incentive payment will be distributed on January 5, 2023. Once employees complete disciplinary probation in FY 2023, they may receive the incentive payment. For more information, please contact the Office of Finance and Accounting.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-128, authorizing settlement of Worker’s Compensation claims, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Tribal Council met in executive session with the worker’s compensation counsel to discuss settlement of three (3) pending worker’s compensation claims involving one claimant. For more information, please contact the Office of the Attorney General.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-129, approving the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Youth Opportunity Program revised Employee Handbook for 2023, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Youth Opportunity Program updates their employee handbook yearly & submits revisions to Tribal Council for final approval. For more information, please contact the Youth Opportunity Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-130, approving a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Choctaw Tribal Schools & Mississippi State University for 3D Weather Data Analysis & Visualization Project, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: Mississippi State University will conduct research assessing the effects of learning modules that foster literacy in atmospheric & computational sciences among Choctaw Tribal Schools students in grades 3-12 as part of Mississippi State University’s STEM+C research award from the National Science Foundation. For more information, please contact the Department of Schools.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-131, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Choctaw Health Center to apply for funding for the Special Diabetes Program for Indians from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Indian Health Service, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) will continue to fund full-time employees & key personnel to provide diabetes prevention services & treatment. For more information, please contact Choctaw Health Center.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-132, approving the 2022-2023 Wildlife Proclamation to regulate hunting & fishing on Tribal lands, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Wildlife Proclamation is revised & updated annually & includes a schedule of hunting permit fees, fishing permit fees & fees for Lake Pushmataha & outlines the penalties & fines for violations. For more information, please contact Wildlife and Parks Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 22-133(B), approving a residential lease in the Tucker Community, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to a last will & testament that was probated in the Choctaw Tribal Court, Jimmy Lee Ben inherited a house located in the Tucker Community, & a lease was approved for that property. For more information, please contact the Realty Program.

REGULAR CALL MEETING OCTOBER 11, 2022

RESOLUTION CHO 23-001(B), approving a conditional relinquishment of membership in the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians for R.M. (DOB: 10/15/1961). In accordance with Title XXII—Tribal Enrollment Code §22-4-1, any adult MBCI Tribal member may voluntarily relinquish their MBCI Tribal membership contingent upon their enrollment as a member of another federally-recognized Indian Tribe. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-002(B), approving an absolute relinquishment of membership in the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves one (1) conditional relinquishment of membership in the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians for R.M. (DOB: 05/28/1971). In accordance with Title XXII—Tribal Enrollment Code §22-4-1, any adult MBCI Tribal member may voluntarily relinquish their MBCI Tribal membership contingent upon their enrollment as a member of another federally-recognized Indian Tribe. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-003(B), approving increases in blood degree & name changes for previously enrolled Tribal members, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves increases in blood degree & name changes for
Tribe Hosts First In-Person Thanksgiving Feast Since ‘19

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) celebrated the return of the annual Tribal-Wide Thanksgiving Feast at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw on Tuesday, November 8, 2022.

Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Nickey and Choctaw Central High School Senior Class President Jacon Johnson served as co-hosts as they welcomed all in attendance. It was the first time since 2019 the feast was held in-person due to coronavirus restrictions. The previous two feasts were held as drive-through events at the parking lot of Geyser Falls Water Theme Park in Choctaw.

Tribal drummers led a procession into the ballroom that included members of Neshoba Central High School’s JROTC unit presenting the U.S. and MBCI flags. Red Water Elementary School

see FEAST, pg. 12

Hundreds were in attendance as the feast returned to the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw on November 8, 2022.

previously enrolled Tribal members. In accordance with Title XXII—Tribal Enrollment Code §22-2-8, a person may submit an application for change in blood quantum calculation based upon new or additional information about paternity or maternity. The Tribal Enrollment Committee previously approved an increase in blood degree & name change for eight (8) previously enrolled Tribal members. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-004(B), enrolling Tribal members, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves Tribal Enrollment for thirty-six (36) persons beginning with the name T. Anderson & ending with J. Willis. With the adoption of the Resolution, there are 11,028 enrolled Tribal members in the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-005, amending the Choctaw Loan Program Policy, was ADOPTED - 14 YES (L. Ahshapanek, M. Briscoe, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, R. Isaac, D. Martin, W. McMillan, D. Mingo, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wallace, & K. Wesley); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT (C. Eaves, S. Johnson & H. Nickey).

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves amendments to the Choctaw Loan Program Policy. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Loan Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-006, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Choctaw Loan Program to apply for an Indian Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, was ADOPTED - 13 YES (L. Ahshapanek, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, R. Isaac, D. Martin, W. McMillan, D. Mingo, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wallace, & K. Wesley); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT (M. Briscoe, C. Eaves, S. Johnson, & H. Nickey).

SUMMARY: The Choctaw Loan Program will use the ICDBG grant funding to partially fund renovations & repairs to thirty (30) cottages. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Loan Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-007(B), authorizing the sale of all forest products within Pearl River Community Unit 22, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: Timber sale includes 1,505 tons of pine logs, 652 tons of pine chip-n-saw, 552 tons of pine pulpwood & 90 tons of t-wood. For more information, please contact the Department of Natural Resources.

RESOLUTION CHO 23-008, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians’ Choctaw Health Center, Behavioral Health Program to apply for funding through the Project AWARE Program from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Choctaw Health Center’s Behavioral Health Program plans to use grant funding available through the Project AWARE (Advancing Wellness and Resiliency in Education) Program to develop a sustainable infrastructure for school-based mental health programs & services. The purpose of the Project AWARE Program is to promote the healthy social & emotional development of school-aged youth & prevent youth violence in school settings. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Health Center.

To request a copy of a Resolution/Ordinance and/or attachment, please fill out a request for a Resolution/Ordinance form and submit it to the Policy & Legislative Office at krystina.thompson@choctaw.org.

Requests for attachments to Tribal Enrollment Resolutions will not be honored due to confidentiality rules.
music students Nyla Wilson, Serena Tubby, and Laila Lewis sang the National Anthem in Choctaw, followed by an invocation by Vice Chief Ronnie Henry, Sr. of the Bogue Chitto Community.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben spoke to the audience of all the challenges and adversities we faced since the Tribe last held the feast in 2019, prior to the pandemic, but through it all, we truly emphasized the resiliency of the Choctaw people.

“Each and everyone of you has gone through adversity in some shape, form, or fashion, but God gave us that blessing of having the strength and breath to walk upon this earth. I also thank the Lord for giving us this opportunity for acknowledging what He has brought us through and where we are today,” said Chief Ben.

“We have a path in life that God has called us to do. You may not feel like its a big thing when you lend a helping hand, but when you do things in your community, you are an intricate part in making things possible by helping others and making everything successful.”

Even through challenging times, the Tribe maintained progress as they received federal funding to construct nine COVID/Emergency Relief Facilities (CERF) throughout the Tribal communities and a Choctaw EMA Logistics Facility on the Choctaw Fire Department campus. The Tribe also established a partnership with MaxxSouth Broadband to expand their system to serve over 2,000 tribal homes in six of the eight Tribal communities. The Tribe received an $8.43 million Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) grant award earlier this year from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) that will provide funding for much needed internet access across Choctaw Tribal lands. Developments are also underway for Pearl River Resort, including the renovation of Dancing Rabbit Inn in Choctaw, expansion of Bok Homa Casino in Sandersville, and a new plaza in Louisville.

As 2023 approaches, the Choctaw Central High School
campus will celebrate 60 years in existence. With student population growth and an infrastructure in need of upgrades and modernization, a new high school/middle school campus is in the works on Highway 16 West.

“It will take time to build, but this is for the children, the grandchildren, and future generations. I hope the new facility we build will last 60 more years so other generations can have a place to learn and succeed,” Chief Ben said.

A state of the tribe video highlighting the accomplishments and successes of the Tribe in 2022 was presented by the Office of Public Information—Choctaw Video.

While attendees enjoyed their delicious Thanksgiving meal, entertainment was provided by the Red Water Elementary School music students as they performed several of their favorite song selections. Members of the Chahta Alla Youth Council Social Dancers performed several traditional social dances. After, Chief Ben presented the group with a check of $2,000 to assist with future community service projects.

Champions from the 2022 World Series Stickball (WSS) divisions were honored as they were presented their championship banners from Chief Ben, Princess Nickey, and WSS Commissioner Thomas Ben. Champions included: Beaver Dam, Pushmataha Division (10-13); Pearl River, Tulli Okchi Ishko Division (14-17); Koni Hata Ohoyo, Women’s Division; Beaver Dam, Men’s 35-Over Division; and Bok Cito, Men’s Division.

Bro. Olin Williams provided the blessing for the Tribe to conclude the festivities.

Thanksgiving Feast Held in Henning

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians hosted the 2022 Henning, TN Community Thanksgiving Feast at the Henning Multi-Purpose Building on Saturday, November 12. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Nickey served as mistress of ceremonies as entertainment was provided by the West Tennessee Social Dancers as they performed several social dances for the audience. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben spoke to community members about being thankful for the gift and blessing of life each and every day. He also offered his appreciation to military veterans and first responders for their service. Tribal Councilman Kendall Wallace offered the invocation, and the meal was served by volunteers. Door prizes were given away, with the grand prize being a beautiful beaded medallion made by Hester Allen.
Tribe Hosts 2022 Veterans Day Parade

Tribal veterans were honored during the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians annual Veterans Day Parade on Thursday, November 10, 2022, in Choctaw.

This year’s parade theme was, “I AM ...,” as numerous organizations honored veterans for their proud service for this country. The parade route began at the Choctaw Sportsplex parking lot, traveling south on Black Jack Road and ending at the Choctaw Veterans Memorial Wall, located on the south parking lot of Geyser Falls Water Theme Park.

Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Nickey served as mistress of ceremonies for the post-parade ceremony. Choctaw Veterans Color Guard members Franklin Hickman (Navy) and Ben-nie Thompson (Marines) posted the flags of the U.S. and MBCI. Deidre Tubby performed the National Anthem in Choctaw and Fred Willis of the Office of Public Information offered the invocation.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben offered his appreciation to the veterans and their families. During this time of Thanksgiving, we should give thanks for their service, especially to those currently deployed all over the world.

“Let us continue to honor our veterans, day in and day out, and may God’s blessing be with each and every one of you,” Chief Ben added.

Kenneth Edwards, Veterans Service Officer for Neshoba County, served as guest speaker.

Veterans Day Brunch

A Veterans Day brunch honoring all who served was held on Thursday, November 10, 2022, at the Silver Star Convention Center. The brunch was open to all MBCI Tribal Veterans registered with the Choctaw Veterans Committee, along with a guest. Hosted by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, the buffet-style meal was provided by Pearl River Resort. Pastor Thomas Ben offered the invocation, followed by remarks from Chief Ben and Tribal Council Veterans Affairs Committee members Richard Isaac and Wilma Simpson-McMillan as they thanked veterans in attendance for their sacrifice for our country. Other Tribal Council members in attendance were Nigel Gibson, Kent Wesley (Marines), Timothy Thomas, Sr., Richard Isaac, Richard Sockey (Navy), Wilma Simpson-McMillan, Demando Mingo, and Vice-Chief Ronnie Henry, Sr. Entertainment included traditional social dancing from students of Pearl River Elementary School and drumming by the Southern Pine drum group.
speaker. After serving 20 years in the Navy, he retired in 2008 with the rank of Master-at-Arms First Class.

“A veteran has sacrificed him or herself with long hours of training, loneliness, and days gone by when we didn’t know if we were going to see this day. I thank you all for honoring your veterans because it takes family, friends, and loved ones in order for us to go and defend this great nation of ours. It’s not only a sacrifice for us, it’s a sacrifice for you all. In order to go and serve, we have to understand that someone is behind handling all the business. We are not alone,” said Edwards.

He added Native Americans have served their country diligently, even in the face of adversity meant to keep them suppressed.

“They were warriors. They strapped their boots up tight and went to war. They did what they had to do to protect what was theirs. They’re always looked upon as some of the bravest we have ever seen.”

Growing up in the Sandtown community outside Philadelphia, Edwards recalled traveling with his brothers to the Bogue Chitto community to participate in recreational sports. He befriended several Tribal members during that time, but it was one friend, John Michael John, who surprised him in Norfolk, VA after he enlisted in the Navy.

“We called him ‘John-John’ and we tried to figure out how two boys from Neshoba County got to meet up in Norfolk, VA? We had that common bond, being from here and knowing one another growing up. We knew what we went through, but we served our country with pride, honor, and dignity,” said Edwards.

“John-John was on the USS Ashley and I was on the USS Guston Hall. On August 3rd, we shook hands and said, ‘I’ll see you when I see you.’ We were headed to the Persian Gulf and we didn’t know when we would return. Many days I looked out on the horizon through the big eyes and I see VETERANS, pg. 17
The Special Diabetes Program for Indians hosted a Fall Diabetes 2 Mile Walk on Saturday, October 22, 2022, in Choctaw. Participants started from the Choctaw Central High School entrance, walked to the Smith John Justice Center, then returned to the school campus. Overall winners were (male) Treylon Lindsey & (female) Onyx Bobo.

Participants who placed 1st and 2nd in their respective age category are listed below.

AGES 7 & UNDER: (male) 1st, Jayden Anderson; 2nd, Taten Stephens; (female) 1st, Sahyimmi Isaac; 2nd, Bekah John.

AGES 8-10: (male) 1st, Chanceton Shoemake; 2nd, Del Laneny Lindsey; (female) 1st, Aleira Davis; 2nd, Journeigh Isaac.

AGES 11-14: (male) 1st, Quinton Stephens; 2nd, Joshua Willis; (female) 1st, Jaliyah Lewis; 2nd, Braylee McGee.

AGES 15-19: (male) 1st, Aiden Lilly; 2nd, Cordero Bobo, Jr.; (female) 1st, Clianna Phillips; 2nd, Deshaylee Tubby.

AGES 20-29: (male) 1st, Dregen Joe; 2nd, Jermaine Dixon; (female) 1st, TJ Redhouse; 2nd, Taysia Lewis.

AGES 30-39: (male) 1st, Albert Lewis; 2nd, Todd Stephens; (female) 1st, Dymanda Jimmie; 2nd, Rhiannon Lilly.

AGES 40-49: (male) 1st, Malachi Steve; 2nd, Derek Willis; (female) 1st, Laura Dees; 2nd, Lindsey Gibson.

AGES 50-59: (male) 1st, Ricky Alex; 2nd, Arnold Haynes; (female) 1st, Marion Sockey; 2nd, Sharon Brown.

AGES 60-OVER: (male) 1st, Adolph Vivians; 2nd, Leonard

continued next page

Breast Cancer Survivors Honored  A Pink Out Breast Cancer Awareness recognition event was held during pre-game festivities of Choctaw Central High School’s Senior Night on Thursday evening, Oct. 27. The event honored breast cancer survivors, those who are still fighting the disease & remembered those who have passed. Thank you to these courageous individuals & family representatives who came out & were recognized.
could see his ship. I often wondered ‘what’s that ole boy doing?’ I thank God we all made it back.”

This year’s parade grand marshals, selected by the Choctaw Veterans Committee, were Leonard Jimmie, Jr. and Dinah Williams. Jimmie enlisted in the U.S. Navy in November 1979 and was honorably discharged in 1986 with the rank of Electrician’s Mate, Petty Officer Third Class. Williams enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 1981, and was honorably discharged on June 30, 1993, with the rank of Sergeant.

Poster contest winners were announced. Placing 1st was Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) senior Destiny Hickman; 2nd, CCHS junior Rayna Mendez; and 3rd, CCHS senior Tanyon Willis.

In the parade contest, Standing Pine Elementary School won the float division, Choctaw Transit won the vehicle division and CCHS Maroon Marching Band won the walking division.

Serving as judges were: (poster) Kendra Anderson, Rodgrick Anderson, and Shelbi Bell; (parade) Kelby Anderson, Brianna Vaughn, and Gerren Isaac.

The MBCI Protective Services Unit conducted a 21-gun salute, followed by the playing of Taps.

Tribal veterans in attendance received a commemorative tote bag, compliments of the Choctaw Veterans Committee, Tribal Chief Ben and the Tribal Administration.

Jimmie, Jr.; (female) 1st, Ruthie Bell; 2nd, Cheryl Denson.

The Diabetes Clinic, located on the second floor at Choctaw Health Center in Choctaw, is staffed with a physician, family nurse practitioner, diabetes nurse educator, and a licensed practical nurse. They also house the SDPI Diabetes Prevention Team as they work closely with those diagnosed with pre-diabetes.

Classes are offered every Monday at 12:00 p.m., as they learn about the benefits of exercising, calorie counting, meal planning, etc.

If you are interested to see if you qualify for the SDPI program or set up an appointment to schedule screenings or see a provider, call the Diabetic Clinic at 601-389-4370.
Influenza (flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by the influenza virus that infects the nose, throat, & lungs. Some people, especially people 65 years & older, young children, & people with additional health concerns, are at higher risk of developing serious complications from the flu. The best way to reduce your risk of getting the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year.

The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention recommends that everyone ages 6 months & older get a flu vaccine. Flu vaccines are available now at the Choctaw Health Center & outlying clinics.

Early increases in seasonal influenza activity are being noted nationwide, especially in the southeastern & south-central portions of the nation.

Choctaw Health Center is not seeing a surge in Influenza A cases.
What is RSV?

An early and severe surge of Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is taking place in multiple regions of the country and overwhelming children’s hospitals.

Usually circulating from late fall through early spring, hospitals typically see a jump in RSV cases in late winter. This year, cases began appearing this summer and have steadily risen since, creating significant capacity issues at children’s hospitals across the country.

RSV is the most common cause of bronchiolitis (inflammation of the small airways in the lung) and pneumonia (infection of the lungs) in children younger than 1 year of age.

While most people recover in a week or two, RSV can be serious, especially for infants.

People infected with RSV are usually contagious for 3 to 8 days. However, some infants, and people with weakened immune systems, can continue to spread the virus even after they stop showing symptoms, for as long as 4 weeks. Children are often exposed to and infected with RSV outside the home, such as in school or child-care centers. They can then transmit the virus to other members of the family.

RSV can spread when:

- An infected person coughs or sneezes.
- You get virus droplets from a cough or sneeze in your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- You touch a surface that has the virus on it, like a doorknob, and then touch your face before washing your hands.
- You have direct contact with the virus, like kissing the face of a child with RSV.

American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) infants are at increased risk of severe RSV compared to infants across the US, with 10 percent of Native American infants hospitalized with RSV infections each year.

For more information about RSV, visit the ihs.gov website or CDC website.
Fun at the Fall Harvest Fest

On October 25-28, 2022, the Department of Natural Resources/Agriculture Extension Program hosted Fall Harvest Fest at the Department of Natural Resources facilities & Lake Pushmataha in the Pearl River Community. Nearly 550 Pre-Kindergarten through second grade students & teachers from the Choctaw Tribal Schools & Department of Early Childhood Education participated in four fun-filled days of fall activities. The event was funded through a grant from the Choctaw Community Fund. Since 1998, the Department of Natural Resources & the Department of Early Childhood Education have come together to offer fun, educational activities specifically for students in the younger grades. In addition to receiving goodies provided by Tribal departments & programs, the highlight of the day was taking a hayride across the road to the grounds of Lake Pushmataha as cutouts of their favorite animated characters were on display. On the last day, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben was in attendance to enjoy the fun activities with the students as everybody had a great & memorable time!

Green Corn Festival

The Department of Early Childhood Education hosted their 30th Annual Green Corn Festival on Friday, Oct. 21, at the Standing Pine Community Recreational Field. The event showcases pre-school aged early childhood children performing Choctaw social dances in their traditional attire in an effort to keep the Choctaw heritage alive by passing on the traditions to the DOECE children. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Tribal Council members Loriann Ahshapanek of Standing Pine & Wilma Simpson-McMillan of Tucker offered remarks. A traditional meal was served after the performances.
Choctaw Tribal Schools Release Honor Roll

The Choctaw Tribal Schools recently announced students named to the first nine-weeks honor roll for the 2022-2023 school year. Students recognized on the Chief’s List (all A’s) & Principal’s List/Honor Roll (all A’s & B’s) are listed below.

BOGUE CHITTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHIEF’S LIST
(1st Grade) - Deyunte Fuller, Bekah John, Brooke Nickey, & Emerald Runnels.
(7th Grade) - Neveah McCool.

PRINCIPAL’S LIST
(1st Grade) - Zayelynn Nickey & Nala Tubby.
(2nd Grade) - Cornelia Bell, Jaisely Chickaway, Jalayah Clemmons, Stoney Henry, Alistair Jim, Echo McMillan, & Lucas Thomas.
(3rd Grade) - Paisley Hickman, Taelor Crosby, Christopher Hickman, Doni Mason, Ay’Zree Mitch, & Lai’Lee Williams.
(4th Grade) - Raylynn Amos, Easton Hundley, & Tamina Jim.
(5th Grade) - Ollie Hickman & Ivan Houston.

CHOCHTAW CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL

CHIEF’S LIST
(12th Grade) - Emaliyah King, Jaleann Sockey, Quintin Sockey, Gannon Vaughn, Janina Williams, & Peyton Willis.
(11th Grade) - Chesney Amos, Jocelyn Bell, Kyllinn Bell, Mattison Bell, Delaiah Billy, Lakenton Chickaway, Jafari Denson, Kaniya Frazier, Brennan Henry, Tori Henry, Tristen Henry, Kodi Jimmie, Jayce Sam, Amilia Sebastian, Ashlynn Stephens, Joelton Thomas, Connar Vaughn, Destinee Williams, Dreshawn Williams, & Koie Williams.
(10th Grade) - Amari Amos, Kethan Anderson, Karl Bell, Damian Billie, Kaegan Henry, Mauhree Jones, Taelan Martin, Ralynleigh Perry, Christianna Weeks, & Brylee Willis.

HONOR ROLL
(9th Grade) - Olin Alex, Yazzlynn Alex, Danity Anderson, Adam Bell, Peyton Bell, Zaiya Bell, Zoe Bell, Anniston Billy, Silas Billy, Arianna Cotton, Lexie Cotton, Jmearie Davis, Xhaiden Edwards, Ulyla King, Chloe Wells; (Choctaw Central Middle School) Beauvy Bell; (Conehatta Elementary School) Kinsley King Alex Smith, Shyne Chickaway; (Pearl River Elementary School) Traith’sin John, Payton Meely, D’Anthony Willis, Kamarri Cantrell, Ilyah King; (Red Water Elementary School) Ashlynn Killingsworth, Jayesna Wishk, Nylah Wilson, Serena Tubby; & (Tucker Elementary School) Bryceton McMillan, Jace Segenhagen, Hunter Segenhagen.

CTS Students Honored for Perfect Scores

Congratulations to students in the Choctaw Tribal Schools who made perfect scores on their state tests. Students were honored during pre-game festivities during CCHS Homecoming on October 14. On October 28, the students were honored with a “Perfect Score Luncheon” at Clearwater Key Beach Club in Choctaw. They received banners & words of encouragement from Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Director of Schools Dr. Randy Grierson. Honorees include: (Choctaw Central High School) Seth Lewis, Keydren Thompson, Kanyon Tubby, Keondrae Anderson, Yuliana King, Chloe Wells; (Choctaw Central Middle School) Beauvy Bell; (Conehatta Elementary School) Kinsley King Alex Smith, Shyne Chickaway; (Pearl River Elementary School) Traith’sin John, Payton Meely, D’Anthony Willis, Kamarri Cantrell, Ilyah King; (Red Water Elementary School) Ashlynn Killingsworth, Jayesna Wishk, Nylah Wilson, Serena Tubby; & (Tucker Elementary School) Bryceton McMillan, Jace Segenhagen, Hunter Segenhagen.
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HONOR ROLL ....................................................................................................................... continued from page twenty-one


CHOCTAW CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHIEF'S LIST
(8th Grade) - Kailynn Perry.

HONOR ROLL
(7th Grade) - Beauwy Bell, Osi Chapman, Anabella Farve, Dracten Isaac, Eliyah Jimmie, Jalaya Routh, Ashton Stephens, Westbrook Thompson, Carmella Tubby, Ni'Leyah Williams, & Brylas Willis.


CONEHATTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHIEF'S LIST
(1st Grade) - Hannah Crosby, Cheri Hicks, Tobias John, April Lewis, Baldin Morris, Epsyn Stephens, Haiden Willis, & Gracie Wilson.

(2nd Grade) - Langston Logan, Zoe Wallace, & Ka'Draizlyn Williams.

(5th Grade) - Rodrick Anderson & Kinsley King.

(6th Grade) - Konley Anderson.

(8th Grade) - Taijah Kessinger.

PRINCIPAL'S LIST
(1st Grade) - Brayas Bell, Raydon Bell, Da'Nylie Ben, Ameira Edwards, Everly Evans, Roslyn Farmer, Bryten Jefferson, Paisley Jefferson, Christian Mingo, Kaelyn Sardina, Jayclee Shoemake, & Devante Tubby.

(2nd Grade) - Davaeya Chris-tie, Kashay Charlie, Deanalyn Chickaway, Miley Dixon, Kari Hicks, Daegan Isaac, Laney Jefferson, Da'Niley Shoemake, Ryan Shumake, Jr., Namiyah Tubby, Peyton Wesley, My-lies Williamson, Kelane Willis, Janice Wilson, & Kylyse Yazzie.

(3rd Grade) - Teyshoni Farmer, Ori Stephens, Charllaya Steve, Kayden Thomas, & Trevor Thomas.


(5th Grade) - Javaylius Chickaway, Midnite Hall, & Aubrey Wilson.

(6th Grade) - Zahyce Bell, Miley Flores, Carson Jimmie, Alexis Smith, Kinsley Thoms-as, Tailyn Tubby, Jes'sias Williams, & Justamia Wilson.

(7th Grade) - Shanshia Ming-o.


PEARL RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHIEF'S LIST
(1st Grade) - Jayden Anderson, Danario Bell, Kysen Dixon, Taurasi Sardina, Kaison Thomas, Carly Baker, Arlando Bigpond, Remington Isaac, Aiyanna Chandler, Aceton Willis, Semaycelynn Bell, Ayame Jim, Alston Meely, Kemper Stafford, & Amariann Wishork.

(2nd Grade) - Kaycson Clem- ons, Hamaya Morris, Kodcha-korn Billie, Braylon Clemons, Ahlarc Hernandez, Kaylee McMillan, Tamatoa Bald Eagle, J'Hazlyn Bell, Khryi Cantrell, Garrett Johnson, & Mayderym Year.


(4th Grade) - Kahlon Edwards, Anaizelius Huddleston, Ilyah King, Laiya Willis, & Dawson Tubby.

(5th Grade) - Karyton Hudson & Aryanna Mitch.

PRINCIPAL'S LIST


(3rd Grade) - Jaiyce'Yann Bell, Okshomici Kyree Bell, Lyla Tubby, Alice Ferris, Kolvin Isaac, Madalyn Jimm, Hazzen Thomas, Liliana Thompson, Brydan Lewis, Maria McBeath, Onanhilli Morris, Eileeve Steay, Cayzrea Stoliby, Anna'Laiya Tubby, Drey Williams, Jordan Williams, Eva Willis, Stormie Willias, & Kawi York.


(5th Grade) - Caybriana Hickman, Bella Millsaps, Kaecetyn Williams, Chasion Dixon, Sanaeya Martin, Taven Tubby, Uriah Bell, Kaelynn Chickaway, Nevaeh Garcia, Amaya Isaac, Kaylene Willis, Jaiyceylenn Bell, Paitzley Dixon, & Tylasia Hughes.

(6th Grade) - Sherman Billie, Wyatt Chickaway, Kaiyrynn Dixon, Brandon Lewis, Khanzlee Richardson, Nokial Denson, Riley Meely, Nizhoni McMillian, Ameel Stell, & Arizona Willis.

STANDING PINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CHIEF'S LIST
(1st Grade) - Violet Farve, Colt Frazier, Draedan Sam, & Garilayne Willis.

(2nd Grade) - Krailee
PFE Board Holds First Meeting of the School Year

Title I Parent & Family Engagement Board (PFE) met for its September Board meeting at the Ayipa Cafe as 23 members, guests, & staff enjoyed a delicious lunch prepared & served by Culinary Arts students & their instructor, Marinda Woodruff, at C-TEC.

PFE Chair Renata Morris welcomed guests as she introduced new Board member Carletta Denson. She will represent the Pearl River Community.

Patricia Martin Gibson was recognized as September’s Outstanding Choctaw Educator. Patricia has worked with the school system for 28 years. She has worked as an Administrative Assistant to the Director of Education & served in the Bureau of Indian Education’s Title I Program. She currently serves as the Choctaw Tribal Schools’ Registrar. Patricia is from the Pearl River Community where she attended elementary & middle school.

She graduated from Choctaw Central High School & furthered her education at Mississippi State University. She is the mother of three adult children, grandmother to 11, & great-grandmother of two.

Patricia was unable to attend the Board meeting, but her son, Pearl River Councilman Nigel Gibson, accepted the award on her behalf.

Toniya Lay, Director of Choctaw Behavioral Health, & Tiffani Riggen, Outreach Prevention Educator at Choctaw Health Center, presented a very informative & timely presentation on Bullying.

Dr. Randall Grierson, Director of Schools, relayed information about improvements in the schools’ performance. The schools have seen 70 percent growth on ELA & Math scores since 2021. This reflects a 36 percent increase over 2021 scores.

All CTS families are encouraged to participate in the Read 20 Initiative. Parents & students are encouraged to use the Stop-IT app on their phones to report problems.

Diana Alex will serve as the 2022-2023 PFE Chair & Denise John will serve as Co-Chair. Delnita Jones was elected to serve as Board Member At-Large.

For further information, please contact Heather Adams at 601-663-7640 or Di-anne Johnston at 601-656-5724.

Chapman, & Teyari Primer. (3rd Grade) - Trevyton Dixon, Cerulean Lewis, Braden Sam, Grayson Tangle. (4th Grade) - Jaric Anderson. HONOR ROLL


CHIEF’S LIST

Runners Compete for Cross Country Titles

The 2022 MHSAA State Cross Country Championships were held at Choctaw Trails in Clinton, Miss., on November 7 & 9. Several Tribal student-athletes participated for their respective schools.

In the Class 5A championships on Nov. 7, Neshoba Central High School placed 5th in the overall girls team division. Freshman Kyli Truss placed 6th in the individual standing as she finished the over 5,000 meter course with her time of 22:33.6. She was named an All-State medalist.

Junior Katelyn Williams finished 26th with her time of 25:38.3; junior Ruth Dixon placed 30th with a time of 26:05.0; freshman Yazi Williams placed 54th with a time of 29:53.5; & junior Kailyn Willis placed 60th with her time of 30:44.3.

In the boys division, Neshoba finished 3rd overall. Freshman Zyan Hickman placed 13th individually and was named an All-State medalist with his time of 19:02.7.

Seventh grader Quinton Dan finished 15th with his time of 19:29.3; Emjiae Willis placed 36th with a time of 21:34.7; & senior Omar Williams finished 45th with a time of 22:16.5.

On Nov. 9, Choctaw Central High School competed in the Class 4A championships as the girls and boys both placed 8th overall in the team standings.

For the Lady Warriors, senior Hunter Farve finished 24th with her time of 23:21.18; Roslyn Bohannan placed 26th with a time of 23:38.09; sophomore Christiana Weeks placed 49th with a time of 25:10.29; senior Alexis Thomas finished 51st with a 25:25.01 time; junior Natahsia Willis placed 71st with a time of 27:10.21; & senior Emilayah King placed 79th with a time of 27:50.35.

For the Warriors, junior Brennan Henry placed 25th with his time of 18:48.62; junior Zyler Thomas finished 29th with a time of 18:53.25; eighth grader Anslee Shumake placed 45th with a time of 19:38.97; junior Peyton Mingo placed 62nd with his time of 20:30.89; senior Colen Dixon finished 71st with his time of 20:40.77; eighth grader Deondre Clemmons placed 72nd with a time of 20:46.16; & Cali Wilson finished 121st with a time of 23:33.01.

Also in Class 4A, Newton County High School placed 6th overall in the boys standing. Senior Sebastian Johnson placed 43rd with a time of 19:37.33 & senior Dresen Jimmie finished 47th with his time of 19:40.60.

Willis Recognized by Rotary Club

Congratulations to Choctaw Central High School Senior Peyton Willis as he was honored as one of three high school students in Neshoba County named October 2022 Student of the Month by the Rotary Club of Philadelphia.

Poster, Essay Contest Winners

Students representing the Choctaw Tribal Schools were recently honored as they placed in the Neshoba County Soil & Water Conservation District Poster/Essay Contests. Each received a cash prize & ribbon for their winning entry. The theme for the contests was, “Healthy Soil=Healthy Life.” Winners are listed below in their respective category.

POSTER CONTEST - (Grades 2-3) 1st, A’Ria McMillan, Tucker Elementary School (TES); 2nd, Mariah McBeath, TES; 3rd, Jacaius Willis TES; (Grades 4-6) 1st, Mamie Sam TES; 2nd, Braelynn Thomas, TES; 3rd, Dacey Jefferson, TES; (Grades 7-8) 1st, Shastyn Lewis, TES.

ESSAY CONTEST - (Grades 7-8) 1st, Shastyn Lewis, TES; (Grades 9-10) 1st, Delaiah Billy, Choctaw Central High School.

Congratulations to Zyan Hickman & Kyli Truss of Neshoba Central for being named All-State medalists.
CONGRATULATIONS

Nanih Waiya Attendance Center held their Homecoming ceremony on Friday, Sept. 30. Congratulations to Choctaw youth Karlisha Clark as she was selected freshman maid on the homecoming court. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Cadence Nickey presented a token of appreciation to Miss Clark on behalf of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben.

Leake Central High School held their Homecoming ceremony on Friday, Sept. 30. Congratulations to Choctaw youths Lexi Flint (left) as she was selected junior maid & LaKristia Boyd (right) was selected sophomore maid on the homecoming court. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented tokens of appreciation to Miss Flint & Miss Boyd & congratulated them on their honor.

Northwest Rankin High School held their Homecoming parade on Wednesday, Sept. 21. Congratulations to Choctaw youth Ayauna Littlejohn as she was selected senior maid on the homecoming court. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Mrs. TaRita Ben were in attendance to offer a token of appreciation to Miss Smith as they celebrated with her family.

Congratulations to Choctaw youth Rodezah Smith as she was selected senior maid on Kemper County High School’s homecoming court. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Mrs. TaRita Ben were in attendance for Homecoming ceremonies on Friday, Sept. 23, to offer a token of appreciation to Miss Smith as they celebrated with her family.

Congratulation to Choctaw youth Lyric Lay as she was selected junior maid on Lake High School’s Homecoming Court. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented a token of appreciation to Miss Lay during the homecoming parade on Wednesday, Sept. 28, & congratulated her on her accomplishment.
2022 AMERICAN INDIAN DAY PRINCESSES & BRAVES

DOECE Princesses, Braves  The Department of Early Childhood Education held their American Indian Day Pageant on Tuesday, Sept. 20, at the Pearl River Amphitheater. Crowned were, from left to right, Princess 2nd Alternate KyEmri Bell, Princess Amare Bell, Princess 1st Alternate Madeline Watkins, Brave 1st Alternate Keaton Billy, Brave Kreedon Dixon, & Brave 2nd Alternate Paistyn Dixon.

CES Princesses, Braves  Conehatta Elementary School hosted their American Indian Day Pageant on Thursday, Sept. 22, in the school gymnasium. Crowned were, from left to right, Tiny Brave Taio Tubby, Tiny Princess Peyton Wesley, Lil Brave Layden Johnson, Lil Princess Jacy Tubby, Junior Brave Dantzler Stephens, & Junior Princess Lillian Hickman.

BCES Princesses, Braves  Bogue Chitto Elementary School hosted their American Indian Day Pageant on Monday, Sept. 19, in the school gymnasium. Crowned were: (Group I) Princess Lenaya Dianne Thomas, Brave Jariah Pierce Hundley; (Group II) Princess Jaisley Issi Osi Chickaway, Brave Erik Perez; (Group III) Princess Taelor Emrie Crosby, Brave Kaiden Scott Tucker; (Group IV) Princess Tenayah Shoemake, & Brave Bentley Ray.

CCMS, CCHS Princesses, Braves  Choctaw Central Middle School held their American Indian Day Pageant on Thursday, Sept. 22, in Warrior Stadium. Pictured from left to right are CCMS Princess Shastyn Lewis, CCMS Brave De’Ryan Williamson, CCHS Brave Jaeon Johnson, & CCHS Princess Malaka Morris.

PRES Princesses, Braves  Pearl River Elementary School held their American Indian Day Pageant on Thursday, Sept. 22, in the school gymnasium. Crowned were: (Div. I) Princess Jaysa Gibson, Brave Daylen Rodriguez; (Div. II) Princess Carly Baker, Brave Alston Meely; (Div. III) Princess Azzlynn Shoemake, Brave Kolvin Isaac; (Div. IV) Princess Karyton Hudson, & Brave Cameron Truss.

RWES Princesses, Braves  Red Water Elementary School hosted their American Indian Day Pageant on Thursday, Sept. 22, in the school gymnasium. Crowned were: from left to right, (Category I) Princess ZaDaylia Denson, Brave Tritan Willis; (Category II) Princess Hayden Wishkor, Brave Ja’Kaizen Solomon; (Category III) Princess JaeMerie Wesley, Brave Tyrell Ford; (Category IV) Princess Hadley Mack, & Brave Brady Farve (not pictured).

(LEFT) SPES Princesses, Braves  Standing Pine Elementary School hosted their American Indian Day Pageant on Wednesday, Sept. 21, in the school gymnasium. Crowned were, from left to right, Tiny Brave Jacob Frazier, Tiny Princess Lillian Farve, Lil Brave Grayson Tangle, Lil Princess Bailee Frazier, Brave Layden Isaac, & Princess Shaylee Alex.
Lady Rockets Receive State Championship Rings

The 2021-2022 Neshoba Central Lady Rockets basketball team was honored on Friday, Sept. 16, during a championship ring ceremony prior to the Neshoba Central-Holmes County Central football game. The Lady Rockets completed a perfect 33-0 season on their way to winning the 2022 MHSAA Class 5A state basketball championship last March in Jackson. Congratulations Lady Rockets & good luck in the upcoming season!

Warriors Conclude 2022 Season in 4A Playoffs

The Choctaw Central Warriors football team saw their season come to an end in the first round of the MHSAA Class 4A playoffs with a 41-0 defeat to the Clarksdale Wildcats on Friday, Nov. 4, at Clarksdale. The Warriors were 5-4 in the regular season prior to their playoff loss. It was their fourth consecutive appearance in the playoffs. The highlight of the 2022 season was their win in the Battle of the Nations rivalry game over the Cherokee Braves 30-20 on Sept. 2, in Cherokee, NC.

Congratulations Seniors!

HONORING OUR TRIBAL STUDENT-ATHLETES DURING SENIOR NIGHTS 2022

CCHS SENIORS HONORED Choctaw Central High School held Senior Night activities on Thursday, Oct. 27, at Warrior Stadium. Honored were seniors in football, band, cheerleading, & cross country. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented each senior a token of recognition. Honored were: (football) Jeriah Jimmie, Brydon Wesley, Channing Jimmie, Ruben Mendez, Aison Jim, Jaeon Johnson, Braylon McMillian, Reilly Denson, Taiton Stokes, Haygen Anderson, Gage Lewis, Amzie Anderson, Brendon Morris, Nickolas Farmer, Gannon Vaughn, Kookie Thompson-Steve, manager Braylon Smith; (band) Christian Williams, Janina Williams, Kaiden Anderson, Trevor Frazier, Peyton Willis, Bonifacio Hernandez, Mathias Johnson, Sierra Willis, Elliana Ben; (cheer) Mandy Proctor, Au-드리anna Billy; (cross country) Alexis Thomas, Hunter Farve, Colin Dixon, Cali Wilson; (multiple activities) Natayah Anderson (band, cheer), Saylor Gibson (band, cheer), & Emaliyah King (band, cheer, cross country). Not pictured are Kattielyn Johnson (band) & Kenyun Thomas (cheer). 

SENIOR PICS CONTINUED NEXT PAGES
CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

VOLLEYBALL SENIORS HONORED
Choctaw Central High School hosted Senior Night for volleyball on Sept. 13. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented seniors Malaka Morris, Alexis Thomas, & Keshahn Wallace tokens of recognition for their achievements. Also honored was Head Coach Elyse Willis as she coached her last game at CCHS. She accepted a position at East Central Community College as the women’s basketball assistant coach. Congratulations & good luck on her future endeavour!

KCHS HOSTS SENIOR NIGHT
Kemper County High School hosted Senior Night for volleyball on Tuesday, October 4, 2022. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben was in attendance to present senior Rodezah Smith with a token of recognition & later joined her family during the recognition ceremony.

SENIOR NIGHT AT NWAC
Nanih Waiya Attendance Center hosted Senior Night for volleyball on Tuesday, Oct. 4. Senior Angel Clemmons was honored as Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented her with a token of recognition & later joined her family during the recognition ceremony.
NCHS HONORS SENIORS  Neshoba Central High School hosted Senior Night activities for football on Oct. 14, JROTC & cross country on Oct. 7, & volleyball on Oct. 4. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented seniors a token of recognition. Honored were: (football) Dakiren Wilson, Isaiah Dixon, Keegan Thompson, Demiyas Mingo, Zander Benn, Ayers Chickaway; (JROTC) Frederick Rush & Zachariah Waiter; (cross country) Tamaya Hampton & Omar Williams; (volleyball) Nautica Bacon.

UNION SENIOR HONORED  Union High School hosted Senior Night for football on Thursday, Oct. 27. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented Choctaw youth Davorion McDonald a token of recognition for his achievements.
SENIORS HONORED BY NCHS
Newton County High School hosted Senior Night activities for football & cross country on Thursday, Oct. 13. A volleyball ceremony was held on Oct. 3. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented tokens of recognition to each senior & celebrated with the families during the ceremonies. Honored were: (football) Greer Billy & Sebastian Anderson; (cross country) Sebastian Johnson & Dresden Jimmie; & (volleyball) BreAnna Anderson.

NE JONES SENIOR NIGHT
Northeast Jones High School’s Tazanna Thomas was one of several student-athletes honored during Senior Night for volleyball. On Tuesday, Oct. 4, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented a gift of recognition to Thomas for her accomplishments as her family, friends, & officials were in attendance.

Warrior Youth Football Honored
Participants & volunteer coaches of the Warriors Youth Football program were honored during pre-game ceremonies on Friday, Oct. 14, at Warrior Stadium. The program provides Tribal youth an opportunity to have fun while learning the fundamentals of football & cheerleading. They participate in area leagues where they compete with other youth football programs. Congratulations to the young Warriors & cheerleaders on a job well done during the season.
Who Knew the Real World Cost So Much
Submitted by Kaiti Ford, MSU Extension Agent

Participants in the Employment & Training summer session got a glimpse on how much “the real world” costs on a monthly basis. Participants were given an occupation, as close to their desired occupation as possible, & a scenario to “budget” their expenses needed for them & their family. Participants went to stations representing certain expenses, such as transportation, food, entertainment, clothing, etc., & chose categories from each station that best fit their budget. All participants realized the “real world” costs a lot! A big thank you to Julia Lindsey, Dawnena Jefferson & the Employment & Training Department for allowing the Tribal MSU Extension Office to come & implement this wonderful program to your department!

CLP Staff Completes Homebuyer Education Training
Staff members of the Choctaw Loan Program (CLP) recently completed a week-long “Pathways Home Train-the-Trainer” class for Homebuyer Education & Counseling by the National American Indian Housing Council. The class consisted of topics such as: Homebuyer Education Best Practices; Housing Affordability & Budgeting; Credit; One-on-One Counseling; Foreclosures; & more. All housing applicants are required to attend a homebuyer education session & receive a certificate before their application is presented for final approval. The CLP staff will begin holding classes for homebuyers soon. If you have a completed housing application, CLP will inform you soon of a class start date. For more information, call 601-656-0056. Pictured above, front center, is Darlene Willis; middle row, from left to right, Alicia Wesley, LaShannon Ferris, Nana Frazier, Patricia Baccus; back row, Alex Dixon, Benjamin Stephens, & Mike Williamson.

Diamond Dreams Receives Donation
Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben threw out the ceremonial first pitch at the Diamond Dreams ball field in Philadelphia on Tuesday evening, Oct. 18. Organized in 2010, Diamond Dreams is a baseball/softball league for special needs children of Neshoba and surrounding counties. An avid supporter of the league, Chief Ben presented a check for $1000 on behalf of Pearl River Resort and the Tribe to the Diamond Dreams league. Local school organizations, PRR Associates, & numerous volunteers assisted with activities that evening. As an added attraction, a fireworks show was held to the delight of everyone in attendance.
From the Office of Environmental Protection
Due to the amount of traffic & hazardous conditions for employees & Tribal members on Oswald Road in the Pearl River Community, Choctaw Solid Waste & Recycling Center will be moving the drop off point for household rubbish & recyclables from the Oswald Road gate around the corner to the Lagoon Road gate. Starting Nov. 7, any household rubbish or recyclables will need to be dropped off at the new drop off point on Lagoon Road. In addition to being safer, the new location has a concrete surface & will allow for easier unloading of materials. Please place materials in the dumpsters provided. Do not place any waste at the Oswald Road gate.

MBCI Halloween Fun
The 2022 MBCI Community Drive-Thru Trunk or Treat events were held on Wednesday, Oct. 26, in the communities of Bogue Chitto, Bogue Homa, Crystal Ridge, Pearl River, Red Water, Standing Pine, & Tucker. Families had a great time as they received candy & goodies, compliments of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & the Tribal Administration, the Choctaw Tribal Council, local development clubs, Tribal programs, organizations, & families. Drive-Thru Trunk or Treat events were also held in Henry, TN on Saturday, Oct. 22 & Conehatta Community on Sunday, Oct. 30. Trick or Treat events were held at the Choctaw Town Center on Thursday, Oct. 27, while Chahta Immi Cultural Center, Choctaw Transit, & Risk Management hosted their events on Halloween.

FVVS Hosts Day of Remembrance
The Family Violence & Victim’s Services Program hosted a program observing the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims on Thursday, Sept. 22, at Lake Pushmataha in Choctaw. The purpose of the event was to focus on the impact of murder on families & communities, & ways to support & serve surviving family members. To memorialize Tribal members who lost their lives to violence, a bench overlooking the lake was dedicated in their memory.
On Saturday, Sept. 17, the Boys & Girls Club of the MBCI held its annual Day for Kids at the Choctaw Sportsplex in the Pearl River Community. Day for Kids creates an opportunity for an entire community to get involved with the development of kids. Simply having fun for a few hours allows kids to feel energetic & establish relationships through activity. When kids interact with others on a positive level, they tend to think more positive of themselves. Oftentimes, that positive thinking leads to making better decisions as they grow. Families had the chance to participate in fun activities such as cornhole, face painting, cake walk, football throw, stickball throw, bingo, volleyball, basketball, inflatable jumpers, & a princess & brave pageant. Congratulations to newly crowned Princesses Mylee Ben, Kandison Nickey, Nolynn Bell, & Braves Kason Isaac, Kenyon Wesley, & Zaymian Williamson. A lunch was provided to participants. The event also highlighted several Tribal departments & programs & the services they provide to the community.
Reed Honored for Service
Choctaw Wildlife & Parks Department Director Mitzi Reed was honored on Friday, Nov. 4, for 22 years of loyal service to Wildlife & Parks & the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Reed (pictured far right) accepted a position with the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society (NAFWS). Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented a gift of appreciation to Reed during a luncheon held on the grounds of the Smith John Justice Center. The event was attended by her family, friends, coworkers, & Choctaw Youth Conservation Corps members.

Wilson Retires from Recreation
A retirement celebration for Carl Wilson was held on Sep. 6, at the Pearl River Community Gymnasium. Wilson retired after 26 years of service to the MBCI Recreation Department. In attendance for the celebration were Mr. Wilson’s family, Tribal officials, & several members of the Recreation Department. Pictured above, Wilson (center) with his family. Below, Wilson with members of the Recreation Department & Tribal officials. Congratulations on your retirement & good luck on your future endeavors.

Pickle Retires from CFD
Congratulations to Choctaw Fire Department Director & MBCI EMA/Homeland Security Director Phil Pickle as he celebrated his last day of service to the Tribe on August 31, 2022. He retired after 25 years of service. Members of CFD, along with officials, Tribal Council members in attendance, & Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, offered their appreciation & tokens of appreciation. Good luck on your future endeavors & happy retirement!

New Recruits Answers the Call
Firefighters Cobi John & Peyton Bell of the Choctaw Fire Department graduated with Class 198 from 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 continued next page

Waiter Graduates
Congratulations to newly certified MBCI Wildlife Ranger Jakob Waiter on his graduation from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center!

Bell Completes MEFO Training
Congratulations to Fire Inspector Gabriel N. Bell of the Choctaw Fire Department as he completed the MS Executive Fire Officer (1021-III-IV) training at the Mississippi State Fire Academy in Jackson on Oct. 13, 2022.

Negrete Retires from Court Services
Shirley Negrete celebrated her numerous years of service to the Choctaw Tribal Court Services with a retirement luncheon on August 31, 2022. Members of the court services staff were in attendance as Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented a traditional Choctaw basket as a token of appreciation for her service to the Tribe. Congratulations on your retirement & good luck on your future endeavors.
Choctaw Language Finds Home on World’s Most Translated Website

The most translated website in the world — jw.org, the official website of Jehovah’s Witnesses — includes content in more than 1,030 languages, including many Indigenous languages considered at risk of dying out.

Among them are Central Alaskan Yupik, spoken by some 10,000 in Alaska, as well as Blackfoot, Cherokee, Choctaw, Hopi, & Navajo.

“Translating Indigenous languages is a labor of love for all those involved & for our organization,” said Robert Hendriks, the U.S. spokesman of Jehovah’s Witnesses. “The work is challenging & time consuming. But our goal isn’t to make a profit, it’s to provide the Bible’s comforting message clearly & accurately to as many people as possible.”

Patty Nickerson, full-blood Choctaw, is a member of the Philadelphia, MS congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Witnesses knocked on her door more than 25 years ago.

“I was living in Newton County at the time,” explains Patty. “They answered all my questions using the Bible & that caught my interest, especially when I learned God has a name - Jehovah.”

Today, Patty continues to volunteer her time sharing what she’s learned from the Bible with her family & others in the community; especially those living on the Choctaw Reservation.

The reservation of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians reaches into eight counties in the state (Neshoba, Leake, Newton, Scott, Jones, Attala, Kemper, & Winston). The tribe is one of three bands of Choctaw with federal recognition in the U.S.

“I was raised on the reservation with my mom who was a single parent,” says Patty. “When I first began studying the Bible, she was concerned. But in time, she saw the benefits that studying had brought to me. She even began having her own Bible study but became ill & passed away during that time.”

Today, Patty’s husband & a daughter share her faith. Another daughter & several grandchildren are now studying the Bible, too.

“Choctaw almost became a lost language,” says Patty. “Having Bible-based information & videos in}

Choctaw on the jw.org website helps them to know that Jehovah is interested in Choctaw people, not just certain people. Choctaws are special to him, too.”

For Patty Nickerson, the Choctaw publications on jw.org has helped her to embrace her culture while deepening her faith.

Submitted by Public Information Desk, Jehovah’s Witnesses, United States of America
**Jeanette Willis**

Grave-side service for Jeanette Willis, 57, was held on Thursday, September 1, 2022, at Mt. Zion Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Willis passed away on July 17. She resided in Oakland, CA & was a homemaker.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Harrison & Edna Willis; 3 sisters, 2 brothers, & a granddaughter.

Survivors include her husband, Dennis Hamilton; daughters, Mariah Hamilton, & Denesha Hamilton; sons, Dennis Hamilton, Jr., AJ Hamilton, Montell Hamilton, & Kobe Frazier; parents, Claude & Abbie Chapman; sister, Alison Bell; brothers, Curtis Chapman & Douglas Chapman; & a host of nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, relatives, & friends.

**Larin Kent Thomas**

Funeral service for Larin Kent Thomas, 62, was held on Monday, August 29, 2022, at Macedonia Baptist Church in Conehatta. Deacon Billy Smith & Rev. Mark Patrick officiated.

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

Mr. Thomas passed away on August 24 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian. He was a U.S. Marine Corps Veteran & graduate of East Central Community College. He was an officer with the Choctaw Police Department, security guard with Pearl River Resort then an assistant trainer with Choctaw Vocational Rehabilitation Center. He enjoyed bow hunting, fishing, & being with his grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Charles Hickman, Sr. & Eva Hickman (Wallace); grandparents Henry “Enis” Wallace & Callie Wallace (Jackson), Edmond Hickman; sister, Terri Ann Hickman; brother, Elvis Hickman; & daughters, April Renee Hickman & infant girl Hickman.

Survivors include his daughter, Lakeisha Thomas; son, Gabriel Thomas; sisters, Ethel Thomas, Fannie Williamson, Ivora Johnson, & Barbara Sam; brothers, Edwin Thomas, Jesse Thomas, Donald Thomas, & Clifford Thomas; 6 grandchildren & a host of relatives & friends.

**Bruce Lee Hickman**

Funeral service for Bruce Lee Hickman, 65, was held on Wednesday, August 31, 2022, at the Bogue Chitto Community Gymnasium. Bro. John Frazier & Bro. Randall Joe officiated.

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

Mr. Hickman passed away on August 26 at the Choctaw Residential Center in Choctaw.

He was employed with Chahta Enterprises, Choctaw Paper Company, & Williams Bros. He enjoyed attended Jesus New Covenant Church, playing the guitar, hunting, fishing, cooking outdoors, & telling stories.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Nancy Isaac; children, George Isaac, Hanzel P. Isaac, Sr., & infant daughter Felicia Isaac; parents, Rev. Hugh & Celia Isaac; sisters, Vaneda Lewis, Beauty Willis, & infant Alice Marie Isaac; & brothers, Paul D. Philmon Isaac & Rev. Emerson Isaac.

Survivors include his daughter, Lora Mitch Orduno; sister, Arnedia Duplessie; brother, Deacon Williamson Isaac; special niece, Mavis Davis; 30 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; & a host of relatives & friends.

**Melton Robinson, Sr.**

Funeral service for Melton Robinson, Sr., 59, was held on Wednesday, September 14, 2022, at Bogue Chitto Community Gymnasium. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

Burial was in the Bogue Community Cemetery. He was a member of Hope Indian Baptist Church & was ordained as deacon in July 2010. He was a man of faith & integrity from a generation that understood what God’s Word truly meant.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Nancy Isaac; children, George Isaac, Hanzel P. Isaac, Sr., & infant daughter Felicia Isaac; parents, Rev. Hugh & Celia Isaac; sisters, Vaneda Lewis, Beauty Willis, & infant Alice Marie Isaac; & brothers, Paul D. Philmon Isaac & Rev. Emerson Isaac.

Survivors include his daughter, Lora Mitch Orduno; sister, Arnedia Duplessie; brother, Deacon Williamson Isaac; special niece, Mavis Davis; 30 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; & a host of relatives & friends.
Chitto Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Robinson passed away on September 10 at his residence.

He was a tree planter, logger, & recently employed with Choctaw Agriculture. He enjoyed listening to his sons play music, dancing, hunting, fishing, playing washers, pool, gardening, telling jokes, & being a Cowboys fan.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Billy & Patsy Robinson; sister, Mary Ann Robinson; brother, Robbie Robinson; & three grandchildren.

Survivors include his wife, Tiffany Amos Robinson; daughters, Stephanie Dixon, DeAnna Robinson, Krystal Robinson, & Amelia Wallace; sons, Melton Robinson, Jr. & Jeremiah Robinson; sisters, Lonie Henry, Lisa Thompson, Martha Willis, & Elizabeth Robinson; 20 grandchildren, an aunt, & a host of relatives & friends.

**JOHN EDMUND STARR**

Graveside service for John Edmund Starr, 73, was held on Saturday, September 17, 2022, at the Starr Family Cemetery. Rev. Daniel Tubby officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Starr passed away on September 13 at Baptist Golden Triangle Hospital in Columbus.

He enjoyed fishing, yard sales, landscaping, listening to music, & playing drums for the Southern Starr Dancers. He taught others to dance & enjoyed talking about the Choctaw culture to others.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Summier Starr & Maggie Billy; sisters, Warner Starr Wishork, Norma Jean Starr, Dorothy Starr Wishork, & Willie Starr; & brothers, Ruben Starr, Arnold Starr, & Regis Christopher Starr.

He is survived by a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, friends, & his support dog, Baby Girl.

**BRAELEIGH NITA-OSI DIXON**

Funeral service for Braeleigh Nita-Osi Dixon, 12, was held on Monday, September 19, 2022, at Conehatta Elementary School Gymnasium. Pastor Mark Patrick officiated.

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

Miss Dixon passed away on September 13 at her residence.

She attended Conehatta Elementary School where she was a member of the Beta Club & the basketball team. She also attended the Conehatta Boys & Girls Club & enjoyed playing stickball, basketball, fast pitch softball, volleyball, making TikTok videos, & riding 4-wheelers.

She is preceded in death by her great-grandparents, Florence Billy, Selby Dixon, Bobby John, Betty Agnes Thomas, & Arthur Thomas, Sr.; step-grandfather, Jesus Sardina, Sr.; an infant sibling, 2 infant cousins, 3 great-uncles, & a step-uncle.

She leaves in God’s care her mother, Brianne Thomas; father & stepmother, Glend Andrick Dixon & Mariza Sardina; sisters, Angelia Omba Dixon & ChrisAenn Stoliby; brothers, G’lent Dixon, Messiah Stoliby, Ares Ketcher, & Tushka Thomas; grandparents, Glen Dixon, Sr., Julie Shoemake, Deric Sam, Sr., Vidal Isaac, Sr., & Vanessa Thomas; great-grandmother, Ruby John; & a host of aunts, uncles, great-aunts, great-uncles, relatives, & friends.

**DEANIE DENISE WALLACE ASHFORD**

Funeral service for Deanie Denise Wallace Ashford, 61, was held on Tuesday, October 4, 2022, at the Crystal Ridge Community Gymnasium. Rev. Jeffery Short officiated.

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

Mrs. Ashford passed away on September 26 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

She was previously employed with Cal-Jac Inc & Pearl River Resort. She enjoyed sewing, western movies, cooking, & helping raise her great-nieces & great-nephews.

She is preceded in death by her father, Paul “Philmon” Isaac; daughter, Catlin Brooke Allen; sister, Amanda Isaac; brothers, Randy Jefferson, Gary Jefferson, Randall Isaac, & DeLmon Isaac; & grandparents, Rev. W.C. Nickey & Josephine Nickey, Rev. Hugh Isaac & Celia Isaac.

Survivors include her daughters, Kelly Overland, Summer Allen, & Karley Overland; sons, Lance Overland, Cameron Allen, Kyle Allen, & Evan Allen; mother, Kathleen Nickey Isaac; sisters, Sandra Willis, Vonda Hickman, Sheila Isaac, & Martesha Barrack; brothers, Darris Isaac, Thurman Isaac, & Darrin Isaac; 7 grandchildren, & a host of aunts, uncles, relatives, & friends.

**VENISIA LOPEZ-FELICIANO**

Funeral service for Venisia Lopez-Feliciano, 51, was held on Wednesday, October 12, 2022, at the Bogue Homa CERF building. Rev. Chris Hodge officiated.

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

Ms. Lopez-Feliciano passed away on October 8 at South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel.

She was a Baptist by faith, enjoyed listening to music, & being a MSU Bulldogs fan.

She is preceded in death by her father, Paul “Philmon” Isaac; daughter, Catlin Brooke Allen; sister, Amanda Isaac; brothers, Randy Jefferson, Gary Jefferson, Randall Isaac, & DeLmon Isaac; & grandparents, Rev. W.C. Nickey & Josephine Nickey, Rev. Hugh Isaac & Celia Isaac.

Survivors include her daughters, Kelly Overland, Summer Allen, & Karley Overland; sons, Lance Overland, Cameron Allen, Kyle Allen, & Evan Allen; mother, Kathleen Nickey Isaac; sisters, Sandra Willis, Vonda Hickman, Sheila Isaac, & Martesha Barrack; brothers, Darris Isaac, Thurman Isaac, & Darrin Isaac; 7 grandchildren, & a host of aunts, uncles, relatives, & friends.

**FELTON LEE JOHN**

Funeral service for Felton Lee John, 71, was held on Friday, October 14, 2022, at the Pearl River Baptist Church. Pastor Mark Patrick officiated.

Burial was in the Canaan see OBITUARIES, pg. 40
Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. John passed away on October 10 at Regency Hospital in Meridian.

He was retired from Williams Bros., & was a deacon, music director & Sunday School director at Canaan Baptist Church. He loved going to church, singing, listening to church hymns, watching sports, reading his Bible, morning walks, & being an Elvis Presley fan.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Oden John & Unakay Willis; daughter, Latonya Jeanette Allen; sisters, Janell John Vaughn, Shelly John, & baby girl John; & brothers, Freeman John & Freddie John.

Survivors include his daughters, Ashley John & Tammy John; sons, Ricky John, Nathan Allen, Harrington Allen, Jeremiah John, Antonie John, & Thurston Allen; 21 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren, & a host of relatives & friends.

**Elliott Ryan Johnson**

Funeral service for Elliott Ryan Johnson, 41, was held on Friday, October 14, 2022, at Stonewall Baptist Church in Conehatta. Deacon Joseph Wesley & Pastor Robert Patrick officiated.

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

Mr. Johnson passed away on October 10 at his residence.

He was previously employed with Pearl River Resort as a blackjack dealer. He was a Baptist by faith & enjoyed drawing, watching movies, & beading.

He is preceded in death by his infant daughter, Destiny Faulkner; grandparents, Dale Lee & Cuttie Mae Jefferson; 2 grandchildren & a nephew.

Survivors include parents, Brenda & Eddie Joe; daughter, Midnight Mist Hall; sons, Nathan Shane Cotton & Elliott Ryan Johnson, Jr.; sisters, Savannah Johnson & Cassandra Wilson; brothers, Jeremiah Joe & Elton Shoemake III; 2 grandchildren; an aunt, uncle, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**Mena Dwann Willis**

Funeral service for Mena Dwann Willis, 15, was held on Thursday, October 13, 2022, at Conehatta Community Gymnasium. Bro. Robert Ben officiated.

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

Miss Willis passed away on October 7 at Children’s of Mississippi Hospital in Jackson.

She attended Choctaw Central High School & was a Catholic by faith. Her hobbies included painting, sewing, baking, & reading.

She is preceded in death by her sister, Sherridan Karmesha Willis; grandparents, Virginia Ann Willis, Dennis Williams & Nelson Wilson; & an uncle.

Survivors include her mother, Leslie Shoemake; father, Marcus D. Willis; sisters, Markesha D. Willis, Sharen L. Shoemake, Leloni Shoemake, & Memorie D. Willis; a brother, Brandon K. Thomas; grandmother, Juanita Shoemake; special friend, Kodin Mingo; an aunt, uncle, & a host of relatives & friends.

**Freeman Ben**

Funeral service for Freeman Ben, 79, was held on Sunday, October 16, 2022, at Hope Indian Baptist Church in Pearl River. Deacon Joseph Wesley & Rev. Travis Willis officiated.

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

Mr. Ben passed away on October 11 at the Choctaw Residential Center in Choctaw.

He was a member of Hope Indian Baptist Church & was an Assistant Sunday School Director. He enjoyed fishing, gardening, fixing TV’s & radios, crossword puzzles, & attending church. He was a mechanic & drove pulp wood trucks.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Mike Ben & Otis Tubby Ben; a daughter, Nellie Ann Ben; sons, Howard Lee Ben & Charles Freeman Ben; a sister, Sadie Hissong; a brother, David Ben; & a nephew.

Survivors include his daughter, Tonya Wishork; brothers, Gerren Isaac & Boris Isaac; 4 aunts, an uncle, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**Loline Amos Wallace**

Funeral service for Loline Amos Wallace, 79, was held on Wednesday, October 19, 2022, at her residence in Macon. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

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

Ms. Wallace passed away on October 15 at Forrest General Hospital in Hattiesburg.

She was a a homemaker & enjoyed hosting family celebrations, cooking hominy, fishing, & dancing.

She is preceded in death...
by her husband, R.B. Wallace; parents, Wagner & Rosie Clemmons Amos; sons, Robert Wallace, Waddell Wallace, & Talon Wallace; sister, Maurine Amos Mingo; & brothers, John Amos & Billy Amos.

Survivors include her daughter, Sadie Wallace Hickman; sons, Larry Wallace & George Wallace; sisters, Corine Amos & Lilly Amos Davis; 11 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren, 7 great-great grandchildren, & a host of relatives & friends.

**FRANK WILLIAMSON**

Funeral service for Frank Williamson, 83, was held on Thursday, October 20, 2022, at Macedonia Baptist Church in Conehatta. Deacon Billy Smith & Pastor Robert Patrick officiated.

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

Mr. Williamson passed away on October 16 at Rush Foundation Hospital in Meridian.

Known to many as Frank, he attended the Mississippi School for the Deaf & Blind. He married Meriva Anderson Williamson in September 1957. They moved their family to San Francisco, CA, where he was employed as a wood worker. They moved back to Conehatta in 1969. He was a member of Macedonia Baptist Church & enjoyed hunting, fishing, playing dominoes, dancing with the Choctaw elders program, watching his favorite sports teams, & traditional drumming for the Koni Hata Stickball teams & during social events.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Meriva Anderson Williamson; parents, Arnold & Annie Mae Williamson; sisters, Rachel Wickson & Jeanette Shoemake; brothers, Milburn Williamson & Wilburn Williamson, Sr.; & 2 grandchildren.

Survivors include his daughters, Verna Williamson & Lavera Gibson; sons, Velton Williamson, Michael Williamson, & Gary Williamson; sisters, Evelyn John, Rose Mary Williamson, Anna Williamson, & Ansylin Ferris; brother, Donald Williamson; 9 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, 5 great-great grandchildren, & host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**JERIS EDWARD SHOEMAKE**

Funeral service for Jeris Edward Shoemake, 44, was held on Saturday, October 22, 2022, at the Conehatta CERF building. Gabe Swann & Bro. Eddie Johnson officiated.

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

Mr. Shoemake passed away on October 18 at UAB Hospital in Birmingham, AL.

He was employed with Conehatta Recreation & enjoyed watching New York Giants & Notre Dame football, fishing, & coaching.

He is preceded in death by his father, Joe Shoemake; & brother, Jay Elliot Shoemake, Sr.

Survivors include wife, Latisa Shoemake; daughters, Zaylee Shoemake, Zaynah Shoemake, & Hope Pesata; sons, Zapherious Shoemake, Zerious Shoemake, Zayvion Shoemake, Zay’Quan Shoemake; Tyrin Stewart, & Damien Tsoie; mother, Regina Shoemake; sisters, Angela Dixon & Karidy Shoemake; brothers, Vincent Smith, Vince Smith, & Mitch Shoemake; 2 grandchildren, & a host of relatives & friends.

**WILLIS EUGENE TULLOS**

Graveside service for Willis Eugene Tullos, 78, was held on Monday, October 24, 2022, at Holy Rosary Catholic Cemetery in Tucker. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Tullos passed away on October 18 at his residence.

Coach Tullos was passionate & believed in his athletes. He cared about the youth & tried to guide them in the right direction. A graduate of Mississippi State University, he had coaching & teaching stints at Choctaw Central, Cherokee, Newton County, & Philadelphia High Schools. He coached the Choctaw Central Lady Warriors to their first ever state basketball championship in 1996, & won again in 1998 & 1999. He enjoyed fishing, watching the Atlanta Braves & Dallas Cowboys, track & field, Mississippi State Athletics, & watching his favorite TV shows.

He is preceded in death by his father, James Eugene Tullos.

Survivors include his wife, Tanya Cooke Tullos; mother, Mary Ann Willis Tullos; daughters, Sonja Smith & Sandi Tullos; son, Michael Tullos; brother, Donald Tullos; 7 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren, 2 nieces, & a nephew.

**ANTONE JEFFERSON**

Funeral service for Antone Jefferson, 17, was held on Thursday, October 27, 2022, at the Conehatta Community Gymnasium. Max Anderson & Pastor Mark Patrick officiated.

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

Mr. Jefferson passed away on October 23 in Conehatta.

He enjoyed playing basketball, stickball, & listening to his favorite songs.

He is preceded in death by his father, Arman Jefferson, Sr.; sister, Laurinell Monk; grandparents, Patty Shoemake, Emma Jefferson, & Roy J. Steve; 5 uncles, 5 great-aunts, & 4 great-uncles.

Survivors include his mother, Vera Ann Monk; sisters, Melody Jefferson, Emmalee Monk, & DeeAngel Monk; brothers, Arman Jefferson, Jr., Carman Steve, Keaton Steve, & David Monk III; grandfather, Leran Jefferson, Sr.; 2 aunts, 4 uncles, a nephew, 5 great-aunts, a great-uncle, a great-great aunt & uncle, special godparents & godisister, & a host of relatives & friends.

**GRANT HAYS WILLIS**

Funeral service for Grant Hays Willis, 25, was held on Sunday, October 30, 2022, at the Pearl River Community Center. Minister Curtis Willis, Sr. & Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.

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

continued next page
Mr. Willis passed away on October 26 at his residence.

He was a 2016 graduate of Neshoba Central High School where he played basketball, ran track & cross country. He was a member of the Beaver Dam Stickball team, enjoyed sports, & gaming.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Gary H. Willis, Sr., Willie & Gloria Hickman; & great-grandparents, Harrison & Ruby Bell Willis.

Survivors include his father, Gary H. Willis, Jr.; mother, Lois & Ruby Bell Willis; & great-grandparents, Harrison Sr., Willie & Gloria Hickman; grandparents, Gary H. Willis, Griffith H. Willis; brothers, Gary H. Hickman; sister, Bailey Ley.

Adrian Lee Dixon

Graveside services for Adrian Lee Dixon, 49, was held on Wednesday, November 2, 2022, at the Nanih Waiya Mennonite Cemetery. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Pastor Robert Patrick officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Dixon passed away on October 29 at his residence. He enjoyed fishing, playing washers, dominoes, texting, Facebook, attending church, & being a Nanih Waiya & Bok Cito stickball fan.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Eddie & Bobbie Jean Frazier Dixon; brother, Chris Frazier; stepchildren, Crystal Thomas & Chris Thomas; a grandchild, & a great-great aunt & great-uncle.

Survivors include his daughter, Rebecca Lyons; sons, Mario McMillan & Andrew Dixon; sisters, Lacrisha Dixon & Priscilla Dixon; brothers, Garcia Dixon, Orlando Dixon, Orlando Dixon, Teddy Allen, & Luke Allen; special friend, Dina Thomas; 13 grandchildren, 2 aunts, an uncle, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

JanayLee Nakaye Wilson

Funeral services for JanayLee Makaye Wilson, one day old infant, was held on Friday, November 4, 2022, at the Pearl River Community Center. Bro. Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated.

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

Infant Wilson passed away on October 26 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

She is preceded in death by her grandmother, Rebecca Ann Wilson; & great-grandparents, Lee & Mable Wilson, Bert & Grace Lewis.

Survivors include her parents, Jennifer Wilson & Nicholas Rush; brother, Nikolai Janice Rush; grandmother, Rachel Davis; grandfather, Emerick Lewis; 3 aunts, 3 uncles, & a host of relatives.

Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of arrangements.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Billy Gene Bell, Jr., Marilyn & Cillo Cotton, Sr.; sisters, Jacqueline Wilson-Clay & Sheila Mattera; & brothers, Errol Bell & Rarron Frazier.

Survivors include her sisters, Solvia Cotton, Cheryl McMillan, & Antonia Steve; brothers, Garrison Joe, Ken Frazier, & L uppie Cotton; & a host of nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, relatives, & friends.

Edmund Kenneth Davis

Graveside service for Edmund Kenneth Davis, 73, was held on Saturday, November 19, 2022, at Holy Rosary Catholic Cemetery in Tucker. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Davis passed away on November 7 at the VA Hospital in Tuscon, AZ.

He lived most of his life in Tuscon & was a U.S. Army Veteran. He was a member of Holy Rosary Catholic Church & enjoyed reading & listening to music.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Michael Davis Sr. & Martha Lee Tubby; son, Benjamin Davis, Sr.; brothers, Jerry Wayne Davis, Patrick Lee Davis; 2 nieces & a nephew.

Survivors include his sister, Donna Carol Spottedcorn; brother, Michael Davis Jr.; 2 grandchildren, Jordan Davis & Benjam in Davis, Jr.; & a host of relatives & friends.

Charles Ray Meely

Memorial service for Charles Ray Meely, 78, was held on Wednesday, November 23, 2022, at Dixon Chapel Cemetery in Pauls Valley, Okla.

Mr. Meely passed away on November 4 at his home in Gautier, MS.

He enjoyed fishing, carpentry, cooking, & being with family.

He is preceded in death by his wife, Bettye L. Allen Meely; parents, Stephen Meely & Harry Smith Meely; sons, Randy Meely, Ronald Meely, Jonathan Meely; brothers, Lincoln Meely, Solomon Meely, Dewitt Meely, Gilbert Meely, William “Bill” Meely, Eslin Meely; & 5 great-grandchildren.

Survivors include his sons, Charles Edward Meely & Allen Meely; sister, Lucille Meely; 22 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren, & a host of relatives & friends.

Edmund Kenneth Davis

Graveside service for Edmund Kenneth Davis, 73, was held on Saturday, November 19, 2022, at Holy Rosary Catholic Cemetery in Tucker. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Cotton passed away on November 7 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

She enjoyed flea markets, decorating, & cooking. She was a cook & busser at Pearl River Resort.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Billy Gene Bell, Jr., Marilyn & Cillo Cotton, Sr.; sisters, Jacqueline Wilson-Clay & Sheila Mattera; & brothers, Errol Bell & Rarron Frazier.

Survivors include her sisters, Solvia Cotton, Cheryl McMillan, & Antonia Steve; brothers, Garrison Joe, Ken Frazier, & L uppie Cotton; & a host of nieces, nephews, great-nieces, great-nephews, relatives, & friends.

Shelly Solomon Jim

Graveside service for Shelly Solo mon Jim, 52, was held on Monday, November 14, 2022, at St. Catherine Catholic Cemetery in Conehatta. Father Bob Goodyear, S.T., officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of arrangements.

Mrs. Jim passed away on November 9 at her residence.

She was a Guest Room Attendant at Pearl River Resort & most recently with Jani Cleaning at Bok Homa Casino.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Percy & Idalene Johnson Solomon; brothers, Nolan Solomon & Pat Solomon; grandparents, Murphy & Lela Solomon, J.D. & Katie Mae Johnson; & an uncle.
Survivors include her husband, Ronald Jim, Sr.; sons, Murphy King, Ronald Jim, Jr. & Ronan Jim; step-daughter, Lisa Lewis; step-son, Ryan Lewis; brother, Davin Yates Solomon; 4 aunts, an uncle, & a host of relatives & friends.

INFANT
Gelilah Imani Farmer

Funeral service for Gelilah Imani Farmer, 6 weeks-old infant, was held on Wednesday, November 30, 2022, at Stonewall Baptist Church in Conehatta. Deacon Ricky Edwards & Pastor Robert Patrick officiated.

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

Infant Farmer passed away on November 19 at Laird Hospital in Union.

He is preceded in death by his father, Cillo Cotton Sr.; mother, Clara Stewart; sisters, Catina Cotton, Katrina Dan, & Stephanie Cotton; & a stepmother, Marilyn Cotton.

Survivors include his life companion, Yvette Hustito, daughters, Kieristen Cotton & Dominic Cotton; sons, Christopher Shane Cotton II, Nicholas Cotton, Christian Cotton, & Damien Cotton; sisters, Sylvania Cotton & Cheryl Cotton McMillin; brothers, Luppie Cotton & Cillo Cotton, Jr.; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Delray Dominic Sockey

Funeral service for Delray Dominic Sockey, 23, was held on Friday, December 2, 2022, at the Standing Pine Community Gymnasium. Deacon Marko Patrick & Pastor Robert Patrick officiated.

Burial was in Old Canaan Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Sockey passed away on November 28 at his residence.

He enjoyed playing basketball & stickball, listening to music, & dancing.

He is preceded in death by his grandfather, Sullivan Tubby, Jr.

Survivors include his parents, Peter Sockey & Renee Clemons; daughter, Ivory Rose Okfosh Osi Sockey; sisters, Brooklyn Sockey & Na-Tae Lynn Sockey; brothers, Christian Sockey, Swan Sockey, & Tiger Sockey; grandparents, Frances Clemons, Zula Jim, & Clyde Sockey; companion, Dylanna Charlie; & a host of relatives & friends.

Christopher Shane Cotton, Sr.

Funeral service for Christopher Shane Cotton, Sr., 46, was held on Tuesday, November 29, 2022, at the Crystal Ridge Community Gymnasium. John E. Stephens Chapel was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Cotton passed away on November 22 at Neshoba General Hospital in Philadelphia.

He was a U.S. Army Veteran & enjoyed working on cars & cooking.

He is preceded in death by his father, Cillo Cotton Sr.; mother, Clara Stewart; sisters, Catina Cotton, Katrina Dan, & Stephanie Cotton; & a stepmother, Marilyn Cotton.

Survivors include his life companion, Yvette Hustito, daughters, Kieristen Cotton & Dominic Cotton; sons, Christopher Shane Cotton II, Nicholas Cotton, Christian Cotton, & Damien Cotton; sisters, Sylvania Cotton & Cheryl Cotton McMillin; brothers, Luppie Cotton & Cillo Cotton, Jr.; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

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

PUBLIC NOTICE

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Office of Engineering Services

Notice is hereby given that the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) has developed a Tribal Transportation Improvement Program (TTIP) in accordance with 25 CFR 170.421. The TTIP identifies proposed Tribal Transportation Projects consistent with the Tribe’s adopted Long Range Transportation Plan & provides estimates of funding needs for those projects for a period of five years. Project prioritization & cost projections are based upon FY 2022 funding levels for the Tribal Transportation Program as allocated by Congress. These funding levels may change from year to year based upon a variety of factors. The public is entitled & encouraged to review MBCI’s draft TTIP. Copies of the draft TTIP or to submit questions, please contact Reggie Shumaker, Office of Engineering Services, at (601) 663-7546 or rshumaker@choctaw.org.
Completes NCCER Course

Workers from Tribal Maintenance, Pearl River Resort Maintenance, Public Works, & Choctaw Health Center Maintenance Department completed the NCCER (National Center for Construction Education & Research) Electrical & Instrumentation course. The NCCER is a comprehensive four-level Electrical curriculum that helps trainees prepare for a career in the electrical field. Trainees develop an understanding of electrical systems in structures, follow blueprints, & install wiring & other electrical components, such as circuit breaker panels, switches, & light fixtures. Pictured above, from left to right, are Instructor Kilpatrick, Terrence Comby, Marty Briscoe, Herman Young, Jr., Adam Joe, Norman Samuel, Jr., Chad Johnson, & Dijon Hickman. Congratulations to all who completed the course.