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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

LAWSUIT FILED BY CHIEF ANDERSON

CHOCTAW, Miss. – (July 7, 2016) – On June 27, 2016, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (“MBCI”) Chief Phylliss J. Anderson filed a lawsuit in Choctaw Tribal Court on behalf of the Office of the Chief and on behalf of the Chief of Staff and three Division Directors of MBCI against the MBCI Tribal Council regarding amendments to the Tribe’s Administrative Personnel Policies & Procedures (the “Policies”) adopted by a majority (9 members) of the Council at a Regular Meeting on April 12, 2016. The lawsuit alleges that certain amendments to the Policies are in violation of the MBCI Constitution and that an injunction should be issued by the Court against enforcement of the challenged amendments to the Policies.

“I was elected by the Choctaw People to lead this Tribe as the Tribal Chief, and I take those responsibilities seriously,” said Chief Anderson. “I believe it is my duty to protect the powers and duties of the Office of the Chief under our Constitution and to protect the interests of all Tribal employees who work to provide necessary programs and services for our Tribal members.”

Although there were many amendments to the Policies adopted by the Council at the April meeting, the amendments that are being challenged in Court involve a requirement that certain “political appointee” employees who are directly hired and supervised by the Chief to be confirmed by the Tribal Council and, then, for those same employees to be re-confirmed by the Council in four years. Also being challenged are certain provisions requiring the Chief to provide specific personnel action information to the Council Committee on Human Resources, Training and Development on a quarterly basis. The lawsuit alleges that these amendments to the Policies violate the MBCI Constitution by unlawfully infringing on the executive authority of the Chief and by bestowing the Council with authority not provided in the Constitution.

Chief Anderson said, “While I respect the constitutional authority of the Tribal Council to establish procedures of the conduct of our Tribe, the exercise of the Council’s authority must not unlawfully interfere with the authority of the Tribal Chief to manage, direct, and administer the operations of the Tribal programs and services. That is what this lawsuit is about.”

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The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, under the leadership of Tribal Chief Phylliss J. Anderson, has an enrolled membership of more than 10,000 people and is the only federally recognized tribe in the State of Mississippi. Headquartered in Choctaw, Miss., the Tribe has emerged as a leader in economic development. The tribe provides a range of governmental services including schools, a hospital, medical clinics, police and fire protection, courts, and a center for the elderly, among many others. Phylliss J. Anderson serves as the first female Chief in Mississippi Choctaw history.