

## Interior Secretary Haaland tours Mississippi Tribal Lands

CHOCTAW, Miss. – (January 13, 2024) – Choctaw Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben hosted Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland as she toured the homelands of the Mississippi Choctaws. Members of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) were also in attendance for this very important event.

The leadership delegates visited the Chahta Immi Cultural Center (CICC), Choctaw Central High School campus (CCHS), surveyed the future site of the new Choctaw Central school campus, the newly constructed MBCI Boys and Girls Club Teen Center, and other sites.

Secretary Haaland, BIA Eastern Regional Director Kimberly Bouchard, BIE Director Tony Dearman, and BIE Education Program Administrator Dr. Connie Albert made the visit to meet with Tribal representatives and discuss current Indian education reform initiatives.

“Having Secretary Haaland, the first Native American to serve as a cabinet secretary, visit us here in Choctaw is a proud moment for our Tribe,” said

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. “During my visits to the Nation’s capital, my top-most priority is for our Tribe to have a  
**see HAALAND VISIT, pg. 4**

**RIGHT**, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland (center) with Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben (left) & 2023-2024 Choctaw Indian Princess Nalani LuzMaria Thompson. **BELOW LEFT**, Sec. Haaland visits the Boys & Girls Club of MBCI & talks with a few members. **BELOW RIGHT**, Sec. Haaland preparing traditional Choctaw food Banaha.



## Participates in inaugural parade for Gov. Reeves

A Tribal delegation, led by 2023-2024 Choctaw Indian Princess Nalani LuzMaria Thompson, along with the Choctaw Tribal Schools American Indian Day Princesses & Braves were honored to represent the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians during the inaugural parade of Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves on Tuesday afternoon, January 9, 2024, in Jackson. Earlier in the day, Princess Nalani represented the Tribe as she was seated among dignitaries on the steps of the state capitol to witness the swearing-in ceremony.



Halito!  
 Although most of this winter has been fairly mild, we have had some cold spells and periods of freezing weather. As always, during these times, please be weather-aware and make preparations for you and your family beforehand, so should there be power outages or no access to basic necessities, you will be ready.  
 Our Department of Homeland Security/Emergency Management works around the clock to

provide you with information on weather conditions, road conditions, power outages, and any school and/or Tribal office closures. So please check out our Tribal Facebook page (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians) for the latest information during times of inclement weather.  
 Our Tribal athletes at our local high schools are excelling on the court and on the field. I'm very proud to congratulate our fine senior players in soccer, bowling and basketball. We have more sports in the spring, so I'll be visiting more of these talented young men and wom-



Members of the Choctaw Tribal Council pose with Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. Pictured, from left to right, are Kendall Wallace (Bogue Chitto), Gregory Shoemake (Conehatta), Nigel Gibson (Pearl River), Vice Chief Ronnie Henry, Sr. (Bogue Chitto), Chief Ben, Sec. Haaland, Loriann Ahshapanek (Standing Pine), Kent Wesley (Pearl River), Dorothy Wilson (Tucker), Demando Mingo (Tucker), & Deborah Martin (Pearl River).

en in the weeks to come.  
 If you have a loved one who is a student-athlete on a local team, I encourage you to show your support and go watch them play. It will give the players a boost of confidence and help them to be more hyped and into their game.  
 On Monday, January 8, 2024, we were honored to send our

2023-2024 Choctaw Indian Princess Nalani Thompson to the State Capitol in Jackson as the Tribe's official representative at the inauguration ceremony of Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves. Governor Reeves had been reelected to a second term this past November and was officially being sworn in. We also had a delegation of

**CHOCTAW  
COMMUNITY  
NEWS**

The Choctaw Community News is available at no charge upon request. Donations to help cover the cost of printing, mailing are welcomed. Correspondence should be addressed to:

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Items of interest to the local & Native American community are welcomed. Letters to the editor should be signed; we reserve the right to edit material.

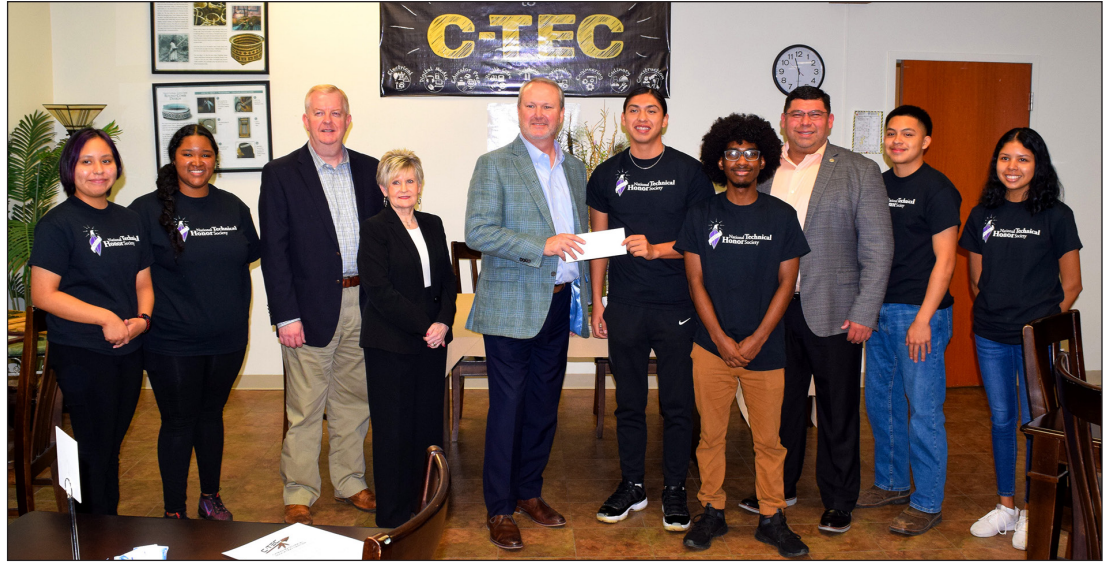


**Bok Homa Casino's Red Creek Restaurant opens**

Bok Homa Casino celebrated the grand opening of its new Red Creek Restaurant on Wednesday, January 10th. The 60-seat restaurant offers a variety of delicious dishes, including appetizers, soups & salads, burgers & po'boys, as well as daily plate specials. Red Creek Restaurant is not only a place to eat, but also a place to celebrate the Choctaw (Chahta) heritage, which inspired the name of the restaurant. Bok means "creek" & Homa means "red" in the Choctaw language. Red Creek Restaurant is part of the recent expansion of Bok Homa Casino, which added 7,000 square feet of gaming & entertainment space, including a state-of-the-art Sportsbook & an entertainment stage.

## Citizens Bank presents check to CTS

The Citizens Bank of Philadelphia made a check presentation in the amount of \$3,488.90 to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians & Choctaw Tribal Schools on Thursday, February 1, 2024, at the Career & Technical Education Center (C-TEC) in Choctaw. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & members of the CCHS National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) accepted the check on behalf of the Choctaw Tribal Schools. Proceeds were distributed from the bank's School Stash Debit Card Rewards Program which allows account holders carrying the bank's VISA Debit Card to contribute to their local school of choice for every qualified transaction. Every time a School Stash card is used, the bank will donate \$.05 to that customer's selected school system. Pictured, from left to right, are NTHS members Keira Willis, Tamara Johnson, Citizens Bank SVP



& COO Mark Taylor, VP/Marketing Officer Jackie Hester, President & CEO Stacy M. Brantley, NTHS members Peyton Mingo, David Watkins, Chief Ben, & NTHS members Dominic Amos & Destinee Williams.

our American Indian Day Princesses and Braves from the Choctaw Tribal Schools, led by Princess Nalani, at the Governor's Inaugural Parade that afternoon. Thank you to Princess Nalani and the American Indian Day Princesses and Braves for being wonderful ambassadors for our Tribe!

On Wednesday, January 10, I, along with Tribal Council Representatives, Choctaw Princess Nalani Thompson, Pearl River Resort and Bok Homa Casino officials, and patrons were on hand to celebrate the opening of the new Red Creek Restaurant at Bok Homa Casino. Following the ribbon cutting ceremony, patrons were able to enjoy the delicious offerings that Red Creek Restaurant had on the menu.

Congratulations to Bok Homa Casino and Pearl River Resort on the opening of Red Creek Restaurant, and we wish you much success!

We welcomed U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland to Choctaw Tribal lands on Saturday, January 13. She, along with BIA Eastern Regional Director Kimberly Bouchard, BIE Director Tony Dearman, and

BIE Education Program Administrator Dr. Connie Albert, visited our Chahta Immi Cultural Center (CICC), current Choctaw Central High School campus (CCHS), surveyed the future site of the new Choctaw Central school campus, the newly constructed MBCI Boys and Girls Club Teen Center and other sites. The delegation was visiting to meet with Tribal representatives and discuss current Indian education reform initiatives.

We were honored to have Secretary Haaland spend part of her afternoon with us participating in hands-on cultural presentations conducted by the Chahta Immi Cultural Center (CICC). The delegation also watched as Choctaw Tribal Schools students worked on projects with the Youth Entrepreneurship Class, Robotics team practice and witnessed a scrimmage between two Choctaw Recreation basketball teams.

The day concluded with me leading a driving tour of Tribal lands. Thank you to Secretary Haaland and the BIA/BIE delegation for visiting us here in Choctaw!

On Friday, January 19, we had a Sound the Alarm event. Members of the American Red Cross came to Choctaw to team up with our Choctaw Fire/Rescue officials and other volunteers and went to the Rolling Hills/149 and Goat Ranch area. 50 smoke detectors were installed in residences that will help protect 107 people.

I was honored to welcome the group and was grateful for the work they were doing to help our Tribal Members. The group was divided into six teams and went out into the community. After about three hours of work, the group came back to the Choctaw Fire Station for a delicious, boxed lunch, courtesy of Pearl River Resort.

Other Choctaw Tribal communities will be visited this Spring. Liaison Officer Patrick will be at each community Spring Festival signing people up for a Sound the Alarm event in their community. Tribal Members can also contact him at (601) 656-0620 for more information or to schedule a time for installing a smoke detector.

Congratulations to the Choctaw Central Middle School Lady Warriors and the Bogue

Chitto Elementary School Braves for winning their district championship games at the Choctaw Tribal Schools Basketball Tournament. I also congratulate all participating teams for their hard work and dedication. We have some talented athletes among our youth, and I can't wait to see them in action when they get to the high school level!

The 30th Annual Choctaw Tribal Schools District Spelling Bee was held on Wednesday, January 24 at Pearl River Elementary School. Spelling Bee participants were the top three spellers from Bogue Chitto Elementary School, Choctaw Central Middle School, Conehatta Elementary School, Pearl River Elementary School, Red Water Elementary School, Standing Pine Elementary School, and Tucker Elementary School.

Congratulations to Spelling Bee winners Elijah McMillan, 7th Grade, Choctaw Central Middle School (1st Place); Grayson Tangle, 4th Grade, Standing Pine Elementary School (2nd Place); and Kady Hickman, 5th Grade, Pearl

LETTER ..... continued from page three

River Elementary School (3rd Place). Great job to all participants and thank you to everyone who helped organize this successful bee!

The 21st Annual Choctaw Tribal Schools FIRST LEGO League Tournament was held on Saturday, January 27, at the Pearl River Elementary School gymnasium. Thirteen teams of students from all six Tribal elementary schools and Choctaw Central Middle School competed in this year's tournament. NASA Teacher Enhancement Center Coordinator Tracey Hartness served as the coordinator of the tournament.

I, along with Choctaw Prin-

cess Nalani Thompson, and members of the Tribal Council visited the tournament and were very excited to see our talented and skilled students at work!

The tournament winners were Champion's Award – Tucker Gems (Tucker Elementary School); Robot Performance Award – T-Bots (Tucker Elementary School); Robot Design Award – Loksi Osi (Pearl River Elementary School); Project Presentation Award – Tushka Osi Lawah (Pearl River Elementary School); and Core Values Award – Robotic Minions (Choctaw Central Middle School).

Congratulations to the winners, and great job to all participating teams! Thank you to all organizers and volunteers who helped make this tournament a successful one!

Tribal Progress continues throughout our communities! We have plans for some groundbreaking and ribbon cuttings soon. We still have several projects in the works. Our construction sites at the travel plaza in Louisville and at the new Choctaw Central campus in Pearl River are becoming developed.

Visit our Facebook page and our MBCI website (www.choctaw.org) and our Choctaw Of-

fice of Economic Development website (<https://mschoctaw-business.com>) to learn more about the Tribal progress happening right now and in the months ahead.

Thank you for your support, encouragement, and prayers. God bless you and our great Tribe!

Chi Yakokilih,

Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief

HAALAND VISIT ..... continued from page one

true working relationship with our federal government.

Maintaining a true government-to-government relationship between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and our Nation's leaders means they know who we are and that our needs are on their radar. Secretary Haaland's visit is a testament to this relationship, and we are very appreciative for her and her staff as well as members with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Bureau of

Indian Education to take time out of their busy schedules to visit us here in Choctaw."

The Biden-Harris Administration has been an advocate for Indian Country and made a commitment to ensure all students attending Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools receive a high quality and culturally appropriate education.

This is the third time the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, a member of the President's cabinet, has visited the

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Chief Ben and Secretary Haaland spent the afternoon participating in hands on cultural presentations conducted by the Chahta Immi Cultural Center (CICC) staff.

Tribal Chief Ben and Secretary Haaland met with the BIA and BIE Delegation to visit the current Choctaw Central campus to see firsthand the need for a new school campus followed by a tour of the future

site of the new school campus; the group also visited the newly constructed MBCI Boys and Girls Club Teen Center and observed Choctaw Tribal Schools students partaking in projects with the Youth Entrepreneurship Class, Robotics team practice and witnessed a scrimmage between two Choctaw Recreation basketball teams.

The day concluded with Chief Ben leading a driving tour of Tribal lands.



Sec. Haaland with officials from the Bureau of Indian Education & Bureau of Indian Affairs.



Sec. Haaland with BIE Director Tony Dearman & staff, Tribal Chief Ben, Choctaw Tribal Schools Director Delnita Jones, CCHS Principal Alaric Keams, & Choctaw Central High School students.

### Mardi Gras Parade in Laurel

On Saturday, February 3, 2024, Choctaw Indian Princess Nalani Luz-Maria Thompson participated in the annual Krewe of the Blue Mardi Gras Parade in Laurel. Hosted by the Laurel Fraternal Order of Police, Lodge No. 2 & sponsored by the Bok Homa Casino, the parade serves as a fundraiser for the police department's annual "Shop With a Cop" Christmas program. Princess Nalani & Bok Homa Casino staff rode



the casino float through downtown Laurel, waving & giving away necklaces to spectators in attendance.



### Participates in Dr. King Parade

On Saturday, January 13, 2024, the City of Philadelphia, Miss., held its annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Parade. Despite the cold temperatures, community members came out to honor & remember the legacy of Dr. King. Among the parade participants were 2023-2024 Choctaw Indian Princess Nalani Luz-Maria Thompson, Tucker Elementary School American Indian Day Princess Jacaiya Willis, local high school bands, & community organizations.

**19<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SPRING INTO FITNESS 2 MILE FUN WALK/RUN**  
**HOSTED BY: SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAM FOR INDIANS**

**NO REGISTRATION FEE**    **March 23, 2024**    **NO REGISTRATION FEE**  
 (RAIN OR SHINE)

**PRE-REGISTRATION DEADLINE:**  
 Friday, March 1, 2024  
 @ 4:30 P.M.

**PLEASE BRING THE COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM & WAIVER FORM TO DIABETES CLINIC.**

**REGISTRATION BEGINS @ 7:00 A.M. ON THE DAY OF THE RACE.**  
**RACE WILL BEGIN AT 8:00 A.M. AT GEYSER FALLS PARKING LOT ON BLACKJACK ROAD.**



For more information contact the Diabetes Clinic: Sharron Thompson @ 601-389-4390; Ethel Thomas @ 601-389-4389; Teegan Clemons @ 601-389-4385; Crystal Lewis @ 601-389-4279; Willie Solomon Jr. @ 601-389-4388

### Chief Ben signs dental proclamation

On Thursday, Feb. 1, 2024, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben visited the Choctaw Health Center (CHC) Dental Department & signed a proclamation declaring February as Give Kids a Smile Week and National Children's Dental Health Month. CHC officials, staff members of the dental clinic, & Tribal youth took part in witnessing the signing ceremony. The importance of instilling good dental habits in children from an



early age cannot be overstated, & regular dental check-ups can aid in ensuring healthy teeth & gums throughout their lives. To schedule an appointment, call the CHC Dental Clinic at (601) 389-4030.

# CHC Pharmacy Update

The following update was recently released by the Choctaw Health Center's Pharmacy Department.

## NEW PHARMACY SYSTEM

We are delighted to inform

you that we have implemented a new medication system at our pharmacy, which promises to offer significant benefits to our esteemed patients like yourself.

Pharmacy counseling services are available, where our

pharmacist will provide you with a comprehensive overview of your medications, including dosage, administration, and side effects, to ensure that you have a complete understanding of what you are taking.

We recommend that you place your refill orders three days in advance on a weekday to enable us to order your medication and ensure that you receive your medication without delay. We also recommend that you double check your medications before leaving our Pharmacy.

## PRESCRIPTION TEXT MESSAGE ALERTS

We are excited to announce that you are able to receive text message alerts when your medications are ready for pick up. It takes only 30 seconds to sign up for this new feature. Stop by

the pharmacy to sign up today!

## HEALTH INSURANCE

Our new system has enabled us to bill insurance companies for medications, thus providing you with a more convenient and streamlined service. We kindly request that you provide us with your insurance information to help us optimize this new feature.

While we are striving to ensure that our new system runs smoothly, we kindly request your patience and understanding as we continue to perfect our processes. Thank you for your continued patronage, and we look forward to serving you with our new medication system.

For more information, please contact the Pharmacy Department at (601) 389-4330.

**DO YOU KNOW?**

You can now sign up to get text alerts when your prescription is ready!

Easy convenience. Receive prescription reminders and alerts.

Download the FREE RefillPro app available on the App Store and GooglePlay, or scan the QR code below.

Text Message Friday 5:21PM  
 Welcomes to the Choctaw Health Center reminder service program. Reply YES to sign up for alerts or NO to cancel. Msg&Data rates may apply 4:58

Yes

Choctaw Health Center will now send you pickup reminders. Reply STOP to cancel. 5:37

Stop by Pharmacy to sign up for the ScriptPro text message alert today!

(601) 389-4330

# CTS announces 2nd nine-weeks honor roll

The Choctaw Tribal Schools recently announced students named to the second nine-weeks honor roll for the 2023-2024 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.

## CONEHATTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHIEF'S LIST

(1st Grade) Brayleigh Bell, Zellar Dixon, Jaychel'le Evans, Deshanalie Isaac, Kyrie Jim, Zoey Jim, Brayson Lewis, Jalayah Lewis, Amos Mingo, Alarie Morris, Nyri Phillips, I'zyus Thomas, J'Rayus Wesley, & Ava Willis.

(2nd Grade) Danario Bell, Jr., Hannah Crosby, Cheri Hicks, Tobias John, April Lewis, & Espyn Stephens.

(3rd Grade) Kashay Charlie, Deanalyn Chickaway, Miley Dixon, Kari Hicks, Zoe Wallace, Peyton Wesley, Ka'Draizlyn Williams, & Janice Wilson.

(4th Grade) Kayden Thomas.

# OPIOIDS ARE HIGHLY ADDICTIVE

## Long Term Effects of Opioid Abuse

The ongoing continual abuse of opioids can result in physical dependence, addiction, overdose or even death. This happens when the body eventually adapts to the presence of the opioid and a higher dosage will be required to get the effects that were previously experienced. Whether it's for pain management or abuse of the drug, stronger and stronger doses are needed to get those effects originally experienced when first using the drug.

## Short-Term Effects

Healthcare professionals primarily prescribe opioids to treat moderate to severe pain. In addition to pain relief and a sense of well-being, short-term use of opioid medication may cause negative harmful effects, including:

- Sleepiness
- Clouded thinking
- Nausea and Vomiting
- Constipation
- Slowed or stopped breathing, which can be fatal

## Symptoms of Opioid Withdrawal Include:

- Diarrhea and Vomiting
- Bone and Muscle Pain
- Restlessness
- Cold Flashes

## If Prescribed Opioids, Practice Responsible Use

- Never take prescription opioids in greater amounts or more often than prescribed.
- Always let your doctor know about any side effects or concerns you may have about your medications.
- Avoid taking opioids with alcohol and other substances or medications. It is very dangerous to combine opioids with other drugs, especially those that cause drowsiness.
- Do not share or sell your prescription opioids.
- Keep medicines in a safe and secure place. Store opioids in a place that is locked, like a keyed medicine cabinet or drawer, to keep them secure from children, family, friends, and visitors.
- Properly discard expired or unused prescription opioids. Remove them from your home as soon as possible to reduce the chances of misuse. To get rid of prescription opioids and other medications safely:
  - Medication Disposal Box located at Choctaw Justice Complex and Choctaw Health Center pharmacy.
  - Find a medicine take-back option near you: [TakeBackDay.DEA.gov](https://www.TakeBackDay.DEA.gov)

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
 Choctaw Behavioral Health @ 601-389-4150



continued next page

(6th Grade) Kinsley King.

#### **PRINCIPAL'S LIST**

(1st Grade) - Jeslie Bell, Steven Bell, Dykylie Hickman, Ezra Hickman, Maizuri Phillips, & Owen Tubby.

(2nd Grade) Brayas Bell, Raydon Bell, Da'Nylie Ben, Aiden Dixon, Desanaye Isaac, & Bryten Jefferson.

(3rd Grade) Davaeya Christie, Daegan Isaac, Zayson Lasarge, Laney Jefferson, Sebastian Jim, Langston Logan, Tracen McMillan, Ryan Shumake, Elora Thomas, Namiayah Tubby, Kelane Willis, & Kylyse Yazzie.

(4th Grade) DeBash Ben, Edka Charlie, Arianna Dixon, Teyshoni Farmer, Jacelyn Lewis, Dracen McMillan, Jayzin Shoemake, Ryatina Shumake, Ori Stephens, & Trevor Thomas.

(5th Grade) Jayston Bolin, Shyne Chickaway, Colton Hickman, Makiya Logan, Jay Shoemake, Jr., & Zayvion Shoemake.

(6th Grade) Rodrick Anderson, Javaylius Chickaway, Midnite Hall, Nylie Phillips, & Darcy Williamson.

(7th Grade) Alexis Smith & Jes'sias Williams.

(8th Grade) Nalayah Phillips & Dantzler Stephens.

### **CHOCTAW CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL CHIEF'S LIST**

(7th Grade) Ansen McMillan.

(8th Grade) Osi Chapman, Devion Davis, Elijah Jimmie, Naomi King, Asia Marquez, Bryceton McMillan, & Brylas Willis.

#### **PRINCIPAL'S LIST**

(7th Grade) - Konley Anderson, Sherman Billie, Wyatt Chickaway, Nevaeh Garcia, Nizhoni Millian, Tekhyius Primer, Khanzee Richardson, Ameer Stell, Karsyn Wallace, Arizona Willis, & Riley Meely.

(8th Grade) Beauwy Bell,

Deontae Bell, Kylie Bell, Rozland Billy, Roslyn Bohannon, Ansley Briscoe, Roman Charlie, A'Yaan Cotton, A'Lali Dixon, Kenndi Dixon, Braylon Edwards, Taylor Farmer, Anabella Farve, Cadrian Gibson, Marisol Gonzalez-Rosas, Hayli Hall, Jayshaun Hardy, Dracetin Isaac, Layton Isaac, Lazarus Isaac, Tia John, Daysity Phillips, Camden Rodriguez, Jalaya Routh, Ashton Stephens, Alaysia Steve, Garrisha Thomas, Ayslie Wesley, Gunner Wesley, Jayzlee Wesley, Kason Wesley, Caslyn Williams, Ni'Leyah Williams, Dathian Williamson, Kailey Willis, & Traviona Wilson.

### **PEARL RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHIEF'S LIST**

(1st Grade) - Koi Bell, Emaline Clemons, Torrence Farmer, Maegan Hernandez, Natalie Jim, Telayli Smith, Leigha Solomon, Tru Williams, Liam Willis, Aubri Charlie, Nevaeh Dixon, Zabdiel Felipe, Na'tyiah Gibson, Kelcedi John, Traiy'tin John, Alaire Ketcher, JuannanPablo-Lewis, Kohen Routh, Marcin Billy, Peyton Clemons, Shantel Clemons, Aeston Martin, Andre Mitch, Lillian Morris, Kazyon Willis, Rayen Willis, Imayya Alex, Jaysa Gibson, Majesty Isaac, Sydney Isaac, Emma Johnson, Daylen Rodriguez, & Wyatt Stoliby.

(2nd Grade) - Remington Isaac, Kaison Thomas, Semaycelynn Bell, Kleilali Dixon, Ayame Jim, Alston Meely, Adriel Mitch, Brooke Nick-ey, Zayvier Wesley-Gamarra, Jayden Anderson, Carly Baker, Kysen Dixon, Zayelynn Nick-ey, & Crimson Robinson.

(3rd Grade) Mylee Ben, Kaycson Clemons, & Padmae Billie.

(4th Grade) Alice Ferris, Marin Williams, Rainee Billy, Neyalih Dixon, Kolvin Isaac,

Adelyn Daniel, Hazelin Joe, & Mi'Kel Osceola.

(5th Grade) D'Anthony Willis & Anzaerius Huddleston.

(6th Grade) Jaiycelynn Bell, Paizley Dixon, Karyton Hudson, Sanaeya Martin, Kaidence Thompson, Kaelynn Chickaway, Caybriana Hickman, & Kaylene Willis.

#### **PRINCIPAL'S LIST**

(1st Grade) - Kamila Pablo-Lewis, Anilah Tubby, Kiiyon Cuellar, Tyler Frazier, Peyton McMillan, Danayeli sam, Karalane Willis, Gabriel Brown, Em'Malayia Davis, Chloe Dixon, Pailyn Eaves, Alayna Jim, Hamaya Polk, Tushkahoma Thomas, Gracelyn Frazier, Maelyn Henry, Eli Holifield, Maeleiana Williams, & Adonai York.

(2nd Grade) - Chase Clemons, Khalani Isaac, Piper Isaac, Denaje Bell, Oliver Carr, Kaizen Dixon, Javen Frazier, Beth Lewis, Alexis Navarro Ortiz, Harrington Allen, Knoxx Bell, Arlando Bigpond, Ettalyn Chickaway, Kaleyah Denson, Hayden Dixon, Everly Evans, Hushtoposhik McMillan, Ashmariah McMillan, Taurasi Sardina, Keyon Willis, Im'Unique Allen, Ethan Hickman, Kemper Stafford, Josie Wallace, & Calvin Willis.

(3rd Grade) - Baylan Buffalomeat, Jalanna Dixon, Ahlaric Hernandez, Ambriauna Hickman, Bryson John, Kaeden Marshall, Kaylee McMillan, Hamaya Morris, J'Hazlyn Bell, Braylon Clemons, Riley Isaac, Kylus John, Krymsen McMillan, Lane Willis, Tama Bald Eagle, Kason Isaac, Ashlynn McMillan, Jaylon Williams, Christopher Barojas, Dakaizlee Clemons, Teyana Clemons, Tyson Gibson, Garrett Johnson, & Kaiseton Shell.

(4th Grade) - Jaiyce'Yann Bell, Kyree Bell, Madalynn Jimmie, Kamea Mitch, Hazzen Thomas, Neilani Thompson, Lyla Tubby, Kawhi York, Zaine

Bell, Brody Dixon, Shohmalali Dixon, Kylyn Jim, Brydan Lewis, Mariah McBeath, San-iyah Nickey, Cordellia Rush, Elilee Steve, Dreynic Williams, Nolan Willis, Mahaylie Clemons, Clooyns McMillan, Anna'Laiya Tubby, Rudell Cotton, Maya McWilliams, Cayzrea Stoliby, Myree Tubby, & Jordan Williams.

(5th Grade) - Natanya Allen, Peyton Eaves, Hunter John, Payton Meely, Dawson Tubby, Randalin Wilson, Manali'i Bald Eagle, A'mi Clemons, Aloni Dan, Jaythan Dixon, Truin Dixon, Kady Hickman, Laiya Willis, Deonte Isaac-Carter, Iylah King, Alicia Stell, Anna-leigh Tubby, Kahlon Edwards, Traih'sin John, Xavian John, Felicianna Orduno, Chanceton Shoemake, & Jaciryn Vaughn.

(6th Grade) - Aliegh'Naya Clemons, Jacob Henry, Ambraysia Isom, Chrisaenn Stoliby, Kamson Thomas, Kaece-tyn Williams, Bryston Wilson, Jairden Wishork, Chase Bell, Chashion Dixon, Kenzo Dixon, Mylan McMillan, Bella Millsaps, Taven Tubby, Brayleigh Wallace, Destiny Willis, Jenni Willis, Taurean Willis, Aubrey Wilson, Taylor Bacon, Taiden Ben, Jacelynn Clemmons, Zana-yah Denson, Laken Dixon, Sadie Farve, Chrysander Jones, Garyzon "Zade" Lilly, Kenneth Thomas, Hector Willis, Lovelle Dixon, Elvira Hickman, Ama-ya Isaac, Treyton Kinsolving, Ryden McGee, Aryanna Mitch, Kyrie Tubby, Tav'n Wesley, Azariah Williams, & Velton Williamson.

### **STANDING PINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHIEF'S LIST**

(1st Grade) - Keri Farve, Kierra Frazier, & Camila Pinto.

(2nd Grade) - Violet Farve & Dominic Tubby.

(4th Grade) - Cerulean Lewis

see **HONOR ROLL, pg. 8**

# CTS District Upper Science, Engineering Fair results announced

Conehatta Elementary School hosted the Choctaw Tribal Schools' Upper Science and Engineering Fair on Friday, February 2. Forty-two projects were entered representing Choctaw Central Middle School (CCMS), Conehatta (CES), Pearl River (PRES), Tucker (TES), Bogue Chitto (BCES), & Standing Pine Elementary Schools (SPES).



Students who placed 1st-3rd will advance to the Region V Upper Science and Engineering Fair, to be hosted by Mississippi State University on March 1.

Students who placed in their respective categories are listed below.

### GRADE SIX

Mathematics & Systems Software - 1st place, Leim McMillan, TES.

Biochemistry - 1st place, Greatone Ben, TES; 2nd place, Cohen Morris, BCES;

Inorganic Chemistry - 1st place, Braelynn Thomas, TES; 2nd place, Kaecetyn Williams,

PRES; 3rd place, Kyla Briscoe, PRES.

Organic Chemistry - 1st place, Jaydon Evans, CES; 2nd place, Alex Smith, CES.

Earth & Environmental Sciences - 1st place, Aymeri McMillan, TES; 2nd place, Elliana Tubby, TES; 3rd place, Samari Jefferson, TES; Honorable Mention, Amaya Isaac, PRES.

Biomedical & Health Sciences - 1st place, Jay'ce Chickaway, SPES.

Physics & Astronomy - 1st place, Nylie Phillips, CES; 2nd place, Briley Dixon, TES; 3rd place, Trevon Willis, BCES.

Engineering Mechanics - 1st

place, Zander Isaac, SPES; 2nd place, Kayliana McMillan, TES; 3rd place, Iley Eades, TES;

Plant Sciences - 1st place, Aryanna Mitch, PRES; 2nd place, Azariah Williams, PRES; 3rd place, Isis Willis, BCES.

### CLASS III (GRADES 7, 8)

Behavioral & Social Sciences - 1st place, Alexis Smith, CES; 2nd place, Tamiyah York, TES.

Inorganic Chemistry - 1st

place, Logan Denson, TES; 2nd place, Ashna Wilson, CCMS; 3rd place, Jaydon Joe, RWES; Honorable Mention, Cameron Gibson, TES.

Organic Chemistry - 1st place, Mamie Sam, TES; 2nd place, Aubree Polk, CCMS; 3rd place, Vanshunti McMillan, TES; Honorable Mention, Lanian Morris, BCES.

Biomedical & Health Sciences - 1st place, Osi Chapman, CCMS; 2nd place, Antonio Flores; 3rd place, Esiason Willis.

Physics & Astronomy - 1st place, Xanaeya Chapman, TES; 2nd place, Tenaya Shoemaker, CCMS.

Engineering Mechanics - 1st place, Arabella Thomas, CES; 2nd place, Damarii Sam, TES.

Mathematics & Systems Software - 1st place, Bryceton McMillan, CCMS.

## McMillan claims CTS Spelling Bee title

Elijah McMillan, seventh grade student representing Choctaw Central Middle School, claimed the title of overall champion speller during the 30th Annual Choctaw Tribal Schools District Spelling Bee on Wednesday, January 24. This year's competition was held at the Pearl River Elementary School Gymnasium.

Placing second was fourth grader Grayson Tangle of Standing Pine Elementary School. Fifth grader Kady Hickman of Pearl River Elementary School placed third.

This year, the top 3 spelling

bee grade winners represented their respective schools in the competition. Participants included:

(Bogue Chitto Elementary School, BCES) - Jessiny Cotton, 7th grade; Ivan Houston, 6th grade; Neveah McCool, 8th grade.

(Choctaw Central Middle School, CCMS) - Alexiana Frazier, 8th grade; Lazarus Isaac, 8th grade; Elijah McMillan, 7th grade (overall winner).

(Conehatta Elementary School, CES) - Kaydence Jim,

continued next page

### HONOR ROLL ..... continued from page seven

& Grayson Tangle.

(6th Grade) - Shaylee Alex, Jayden Hardy, & Daisy Isaac.

### HONOR ROLL

(1st Grade) - Lillian Farve, Mason Martinez, Ricky Mingo, Charlotte Willis, & Time-sha Willis.

(2nd Grade) - Ja'Shayan Bell, Colt Frazier, De'Aiden Jefferson, Draeden Sam, Garilayne Willis, Treyvon Willis, & Trinity Willis.

(3rd Grade) - Krailee Chapman, Zendaya Frazier, Teyari Primer, & Maydream York.

(4th Grade) - Bailee Fra-

zier, Jack John, Braden Sam, & Riley Wilson.

(5th Grade) - Kenaric Cotton, Ha'Miah Frazier, Miley Frazier, Avery Hardy, Faith Lewis, & Milayla Shomo.

(6th Grade) - DeeMarcus Comby, Ja'Keisha Farmer, Melody Frazier, Makayla Gibson, Anai Gomez, Zander Isaac, Zayden Isaac, Del Lindsey, Mel Lindsey, Lenatly Steve, Armando Tubby, Xavi Vargas, Alaysia Willis, Bentley Wilson, & Ratika Wilson.



# CTS hosts 21st FLL Tournament

The Choctaw Tribal Schools held the 21st Annual FIRST LEGO League (FLL) Tournament on Saturday, January 27, 2024, inside the Pearl River Elementary School Gymnasium in Choctaw.

FLL is a hands-on, interactive engineering program that captivates students' interest in science and technology as they learn problem solving and team building skills.

There were 13 teams and over 130 students from the Choctaw Tribal Schools participating in this year's event.

Every fall, FLL releases a challenge based on a real-world scientific topic. Each challenge has four parts: the Robot Game, Robot Design, Innovative Project, & Core Values.

Teams, comprised of up to 10 students along with their coach and mentors, program their autonomous robot (Robot Design) to score points on a themed playing field (Robot Game), developing a solution to a problem they have identified (Innovative Project), all



guided by the FLL Core Values.

This year's robot game theme was "Masterpiece" as teams learned about technology that will improve an audience's experience of a creative

production. Points are scored by activating different types of technology as experts involved in designing the shows and see FLL TOURNEY, pg. 10

8th grade; Timothy Thomas, 7th grade; Jes'sias Williams, 7th grade.

(Pearl River Elementary School, PRES) - Kaelynn Chickaway, 6th grade; Kady Hickman, 5th grade (3rd overall); Jaciryn Vaughn, 5th grade.

(Red Water Elementary School, RWES) - Nylaya Billie, 8th grade; Jadyne Joe, 7th grade; Nylah Wilson, 6th grade.

(Standing Pine Elementary School, SPES) - Mel'Laney Lindsey, 6th grade; Grayson Tangle, 4th grade (2nd overall); Xavi Vargas, 6th grade.

(Tucker Elementary School, TES) - Arianna Charlie, 6th grade; CT Black, 7th grade; Carter York, 4th grade.

During the opening ceremony, PRES 6th grader Kaelynn Chickaway offered the invocation as The Pledge of Allegiance was lead by students Zaine Bell, Kady Hickman, Hunter John, & Jaciryn Vaughn.

After a welcome from PRES Principal Suzanne Hyatt, remarks & words of encouragements were given by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Director of Tribal Schools Delnita Jones.

LeAnn Boswell served as

District Spelling Bee Coordinator, & judges were Kendall Grisham, Amy Pauls, & Allen Peoples. CCHS English instructor Andy Hardy served as pronouncer.

School spelling bee coordinators included: Debora McMahon, BCES; Susie Henry, CCMS; Joshua Sheehan, CES; Donna Crawford, PRES; Sherry Dean, RWES; Leigh Chandler, SPES; & Pam Breland, TES.

A new qualifier round has been added to this year's Mississippi Spelling Bee. Because of an increase in the Scripps Bee enrollment, the semi-final online competition will take place on February 1 & will include the top 3 spellers from 40 Mississippi counties. The

online testing platform is coordinated by the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The top 20 spellers will be selected to continue to the state

competition. The top spellers will be announced by February 5, as they will advance to the Mississippi Spelling Bee in Columbus on March 1-2.



From left to right, are top spellers Kady Hickman, 3rd place; Choctaw Indian Princess Nalani LuzMaria Thompson; Elijah McMillan, 1st place; & Grayson Tangle, 2nd place.



Pictured are participants of the 30th Annual Choctaw Tribal Schools District Spelling Bee.

**FLL TOURNEY ..... continued from page nine**

audience members needed to be delivered to various venues around the mat.

The Choctaw Veterans Color Guard posted the colors during opening ceremonies, followed

by Deidre Tubby singing the National Anthem. Minister Curtis Willis, Sr. offered the invocation and Choctaw Indian Princess Nalani Thompson welcomed all in attendance.

Award was presented to Tucker T'Bots representing Tucker Elementary School. Their robot achieved the best score on the competition field.



**Robot Performance Award** was presented to Tucker Elementary School's Tucker T'Bots. Their robot achieved the best score on the competition field. Team members include Arialyn Henry, Carter York, Mylah Gibson, A'Ria McMillan, Crisney Perry, Leim McMillan, Elliana Tubby, & Coach Jennifer Bounds.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben offered words of encouragement to all the teams to do their best in the competition. Alice Keats served as mistress of ceremonies as she introduced the judges, referees, & participating teams.

The Robot Design Award was presented to Pearl River Elementary School's Loksi Osi. This award recognizes a team that designs a mechanically sound robot that is durable, efficient and highly capable of performing challenge missions. The team utilizes outstanding programming principles, including clear, concise and reusable code that allows their robot to perform challenge missions autonomously and consistently. Solid engineering principles and a well-developed strategy

Teams compete in at least three 2.5-minute matches, with their highest score counting towards their final standing. At the conclusion of the robot performance rounds, awards were presented to the following teams listed below.



**Robot Design Award** was presented to Pearl River Elementary School's Loksi Osi. Team members include Manali'l Bald Eagle, Andym Bigpond, A'mi Clemons, Kahlon Edwards, Kady Hickman, Anzaerius Huddleston, Traih'sin John, Iylah King, Payton Meely, Annaleigh Tubby, Jaciryn Vaughn, D'Anthony Willis, Layia Willis, & Coach Gloria Seward.

The Robot Performance

continued next page



**FLL Core Values Award** was presented to Choctaw Central Middle School's Robotics Minions. Team members include A'lali Dixon, Alivia Stell, Ameer Stell, Karsyn Wallace, Dracetin Isaac, Lazarus Isaac, Koi Sockey, Bryceton McMillan, & Coach Amie Frulla.



**Innovation Project Award** was presented to Pearl River Elementary School's Tushka Osi Lawah. Team members include Jaiyce'Yann Bell, Zaine Bell, Rainee Billy, Adelyn Daniel, Neyalih Dixon, Shohmalali Dixon, Hazlin Joe, Mi'kel Oseloa, Cayzrea Stoliby, Hazzin Thomas, Neilani Thompson, Anna'Laiya Tubby, Marin Williams, Eva Willis, & Coach Gloria Seward



**Champion's Award** was presented to Tucker Elementary School's Tucker Gems. Team members include Vashunti McMillan, Kollier Thomas, William Willis, Cameron Gibson, Xanaeya Chapman, Marshall Mingo, Mamie Sam, Esiason Willis, Logan Denson, Braeson Sam, & Coach Kristina Taylor.

is used to design and build an innovative, high performing robot.

The Innovation Project Award was presented to Pearl River Elementary School's Tushka Osi Lawah for their utilization of diverse resources to formulate an in depth and comprehensive understanding of the problem they identified. The team's solution is exceptionally well considered and creative, with good potential to solve the problem researched. This award recognizes a team that effectively communicated the problem and their proposed solution to both judges and other potential supporters.

FLL Core Values Award was

presented to Choctaw Central Middle School's Robotics Minions. The award celebrates a team that is empowered by their FLL experience and displays extraordinary enthusiasm and spirit. They can accomplish more together than they could as individuals through shared goals, strong communication, effective problem solving, and excellent time management. This team's members always show each other and other teams respect. They recognize that both friendly competition and mutual gain are possible, on and off the playing field.

The Champion's Award was presented to Tucker Elementary School's Tucker Gems. This

award recognizes a team that embodies the FLL experience, by fully embracing our CORE Values while achieving excellence and innovation in both the Robot Game and Project.

The Tucker Gems will represent the Choctaw Tribal Schools at the FLL Mississippi Championship on February 24 at the Clyde Muse Center, on the campus of Hinds Community College in Pearl.

Special thanks to Chief Ben for offering words of encouragement and support, Deidre Tubby for singing the National Anthem, Minister Curtis Willis for the invocation, Alice Keats for serving as mistress of ceremonies, and to all volunteers who donated their time, energies, and talents to the Choctaw Tribal Schools' FLL Tournament.

This year's judges included: (Robot Design) Grant Gordon & Henry Shumake, Jr.; (Project Presentation) Jeremy Willis & Caleb Willis; & (Core Values) Jessica Lewis & Tia Grisham. Robot performance referees were Wes Wallace & Matt Bell.

Their contributions will have a lasting impact on these "Engineers of Tomorrow."

## PFE Board hosts luncheon

The Title I Parent & Family Engagement (PFE) Board held its December Board meeting at C-TEC's Ayipa Café in Choctaw. Thirty-nine members, guests, & staff members enjoyed a traditional Christmas lunch prepared & served by the Culinary Arts students & their instructor, Marinda Woodruff.

PFE Chair Tia Grisham called the meeting to order & welcomed guests. Several Tucker Elementary School students, under the direction of Diane Comby, entertained board members & guests as they sang a medley of beautiful Christmas songs. Students included Renaya Farmer, Arialyn Henry, Keianna Lewis, Carter York, Jacaius Willis, & Kaleb Farmer.

PFE Co-Chair Carletta Denson introduced Andrea Willis of Conehatta as December's Outstanding Choctaw Educator. Andrea has worked for the

see PFE MEETING, pg. 12



Volunteers included, front row from left to right, Jessica Lewis, Tia Grisham, Alice Keats, Wes Wallace; back row, Henry Shumake, Jr., Matt Bell, Jeremy Willis, & Grant Gordon. Not pictured is Caleb Willis.



## Proclamation Signed at C-TEC

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben signed a proclamation on Thursday, Feb. 1, declaring Feb. 1-29, 2024, as Career & Technical Education Month on the Choctaw Reservation. The event was held at the Career & Technical Education Center (C-TEC) in Choctaw. In attendance were C-TEC students & members of the CCHS National Technical Honor Society as they read the proclamation prior to the signing. Students in career & technical education programs participate in authentic, meaningful experiences that improve the quality of their education & increases their engagement & achievement. Students are provided with career exploration opportunities earlier in their educational experience, which enables them to make informed & beneficial decisions about their academic coursework & pursue established programs of study & career pathways. Individuals are urged to become familiar with the services & benefits offered by career & technical education programs & to support & participate in these programs to enhance their skills & productivity. Pictured left, seated from left to right, are CCHS National Technical Honor Society members Destinee Williams, Chief Ben, Tamara Johnson; back row, David Watkins, Peyton Mingo, Dominic Amos, & Keira Willis.



**WELCOME!** Students with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Youth Opportunity Program "On To The Next Challenge" visited East Mississippi Community College's Scooba campus recently. Students learned about EMCC's various technical career offerings, were given a tour & treated to lunch.

**PFE MEETING ..... continued from page eleven**

schools for 31 years. She began her career as a substitute teacher at Conehatta Day Care Center before moving to the elementary school. Because of her love of children, she began working towards her AA degree at East Central Community College (ECCC) in Decatur, Miss., so she could continue helping Conehatta students reach their full potential.

Andrea attended Conehatta Elementary School before transferring to the Newton County School District for her high school years. She is the mother of three daughters, one son, & a proud grandmother of five.

When asked how the schools are different now than when she first began her career, she stated, "I enjoy working with students. In 2001, I was transferred to the office where I serve as Conehatta Elemen-

tary School's secretary. The main difference I see in the schools now is the growth we have had."

Randy Tangle & Brianna Parkman, of the Choctaw Youth Resilience Initiative, spoke about their program as it serves Choctaw youth ages 10-24. The initiative strives to increase the services of individuals through an implementation of youth suicide prevention & early intervention strategies for the Choctaw communities. Some of the goals include:

- Identify & refer youth for services;
- Increase the capacity for clinical providers to assess, manage & treat at risk youth;
- Improve the continuity of care & follow-up services;

- Provide direct prevention, intervention, & postvention services;



Tucker Elementary School students providing musical entertainment included (in no order), Renaya Farmer, Arialyn Henry, Keiana Lewis, Carter York, Jacaius Willis, & Kaleb Farmer, along with counselor Ashland Willis, staff member Kyle Taylor, & music instructor Diane Comby.

# NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

## 2024-2025 SCHOOL YEAR

### JUNE 12, 2024

### 8:30AM-3:00PM

**PEARL RIVER CERF BUILDING**

**\*MANDATORY ATTENDANCE FOR NEW TSP RECIPIENTS AND INCOMING FRESHMEN IS REQUIRED**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE AT 601-650-7409 OR EMAIL: SCHOLARSHIP.PROGRAM@CHOCTAW.ORG**

**FOLLOW US** **TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

- Help create, build & sustain suicide prevention services within MBCI.

**THERE IS ALWAYS HOPE & ALWAYS HELP!**

Delnita Jones, Director of Schools, gave a school update & commended Victoria Billy & Latricia Johnson for their work in this year's Angel Tree project.

Choctaw Central High School Principal Alaric Keams spoke about college dual enrollment that several CCHS students are participating in & announced that Michael Wilson has taken on the role of monitoring students who are dually enrolled. His main objective is to make sure students stay on target with their course work at ECCC.

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



Pictured, from left to right, are PFE Chair Tia Grisham & PFE Co-Chair Carletta Denson, December's Outstanding Choctaw Educator award recipient Andrea Willis, & Choctaw Youth Resilience Initiative presenters Brianna Parkman & Randy Tangle.

# Career Planning Event held

The Choctaw Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program, in conjunction with the Choctaw Tribal Schools Exceptional Education Program, held a Career Planning Event on Friday, January 19, 2024.

The event was geared to students who experience physical or mental conditions that currently impact their education & future employment.

Vocational Rehabilitation staff gave brief presentations to attendees, along with partnering Tribal agencies (Adult Basic Education, Employment & Training, Career &

Employment Services, Tribal Scholarship Program), & state partners (Mississippi Client Assistance Program, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Work Incentives Planning & Assistance, & Mississippi Parent Training & Information Center).

Students & guests visited 13 tables that discussed the following topics:

- Work is a valued life activity;
- Employers seek out the best applicants;
- Preparing for work while still in school;

- What is Vocational Rehabilitation, & how do I get services?;
- Other Workforce Development programs that support job seekers;
- Employment & Training services for youth;
- Career & Employment Services for post-secondary education;
- Tribal Scholarship services for post-secondary education;
- How can the Client Assistance Program help me?;
- How does work impact my

- Social Security Disability?;
  - What if I don't qualify for Vocational Rehabilitation due to not being a Tribal member (State Vocational Rehabilitation)?;
  - How can I learn more & be a self advocate with services from the MS Parent Training and Information Center?;
  - Adult Basic Education services after high school.
- Sack lunches were provided by the Pearl River Resort Convention Services at the conclusion of the event.



East Central Community College

## Out-of-School Youth Program

**GET PAID TO RECEIVE CAREER TRAINING**

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**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

- 16 to 24 years old
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- Resident of Neshoba or Newton County

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# INTRODUCING

## TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP

### WEBSITE AND ONLINE APPLICATION

WE ARE PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE OUR NEW TSP WEBPAGE AND ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM. THE TSP WEBPAGE CONTAINS PROGRAM INFORMATION, DATE, AND OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION NEEDED TO BECOME A RECIPIENT OF THE PROGRAM. WE ARE ALSO EXCITED TO NOW FEATURE THE ONLINE APPLICATION SYSTEM FOR THE UPCOMING SUMMER AND FALL SEMESTERS. THIS PROCESS WILL BE UTILIZED AS OUR NEW PROCESS FOR APPLICATIONS AND FUNDING.

VISIT THE NEW TSP WEBPAGE AT:  
[SCHOLARSHIP.CHOCTAW.ORG](http://SCHOLARSHIP.CHOCTAW.ORG)

TO APPLY FOR TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP FUNDING ON THE TSP WEBPAGE, CLICK THE APPLY NOW BUTTON OR GO TO APPLICATION WEBSITE AT:  
[HTTPS://TRIBALSCHOLARSHIPPROGRAM.SECURE-PLATFORM.COM](https://tribalscholarshipprogram.secure-platform.com)

FOR ANY QUESTIONS OR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CONTACT THE TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP OFFICE AT 601-650-7409 OR EMAIL [SCHOLARSHIP.PROGRAM@CHOCTAW.ORG](mailto:scholarship.program@choctaw.org)

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**Services Available To Participants:**

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- Employability Skills Workshops
- Classroom Training
- Supportive Services

**Operation of Hours:**

Monday –Friday 8:00 am-4:30 pm  
(Lunch 12:00 pm –1:00 pm)

Location: 3rd Jim Walter building left of Manpower Building  
Phone: (601) 650.7386

**THIS IS A TRAINING PROGRAM!! DO NOT QUIT YOUR JOB!!!!!!**

ELIGIBILITY

- Unemployed
- Age 18 years & older
- Native American

# CTS 2023-2024 Basketball Champions

Congratulations to the Choctaw Central Middle School (CCMS) Lady Warriors & Bogue Chitto Elementary School (BCES) Braves as they claimed the 2023-2024 Choctaw Tribal Schools' 7th/8th Grade Basketball Championships.

In the girls' championship, CCMS defeated the Conehatta Elementary School Lady Choctaws 50-40. BCES defeated the CCMS Warriors 41-38 to win the boys championship.

The tournament finals were held at the Bogue Chitto Community Gymnasium on Wednesday, Jan. 24.

Selected to the All-Tournament Team were: (Girls) Reagan Willis, Red Water Elementary; Neveah McCool, Bogue Chitto Elementary; Aza-lea Thomas, Conehatta Elementary; Ayslie Wesley, Choctaw Central Middle School; & Roslyn Bohannon of CCMS was named Most Outstanding Player of the tournament.

(Boys) Brayson Jefferson, Conehatta Elementary;

Braeson Sam, Tucker Elementary; Ja'Qualin Clemmons, Choctaw Central Middle School; Amar'e Clemmons, Bogue Chitto Elementary; & Ja'Ron Edwards of BCES was named Most Outstanding Player of the tournament.



**GIRLS CHAMPIONS - CCMS LADY WARRIORS** team members include (in no order) A'yaan Cotton, Ayslie Wesley, Roslyn Bohannon, A'lali Dixon, Eliyah Jimmie, Carmella Tubby, Kailey Willis, Jayzlee Wesley, Brooklyn Willis, Tia John, & Coaches Kristen McBeath & Darien Tubby

**BOYS CHAMPIONS - BOGUE CHITTO BRAVES** team members include (in no order) Amar'e Clemmons, Ja'Ron Edwards, Antonio Flores, Conner Frazier, Jakori Henry, Mechiah Mingo, Silas Morris, Bentley Ray, Tyreques Miller, Reggie Edwards, & Coaches Kendrick Bell & Magda Bell.



## Participates in Bowling Qualifier

Choctaw Central High School hosted this year's Class I Central Regional Bowling qualifier, held at Depot Bowling in Philadelphia, Miss., on Friday, Jan. 26, 2024. In the girls' qualifier, the Lady Warriors placed 5th. In the boy's qualifier, the Warriors placed 3rd. Congratulations to Lady Warrior LaChantay Jefferson & Warrior Malloy Williams as they were selected to the All-Tournament Team. During the opening ceremony, Red Water Elementary School student Isabella Flint



sang the National Anthem in the Choctaw language. Team members include: (Lady Warriors) Jalaya Routh, Jamie McCarthy, LaChantay Jefferson, Teresa Willis, Trish-celle John, Tenalaya Shoemake, Marlena Rains, Anniston Billy, Aleisa Roa, Aiyanna Frazier; (Warriors) Ladainian Isom, Angel Willis, Malloy Williams, Nickali Shoemake, Seth Lewis, Zaymian Williamson, Diontray Tubby, Abram Isaac, & Damien Billy.





### CCHS hosts soccer senior night

Choctaw Central High School held Soccer Senior Night on Monday, Jan. 29, 2024. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Tribal Council members Loriann Ahshapanek, Christopher Eaves, Demando Mingo & Sam John, joined family & friends as they congratulated the seniors & present them with gifts. Seniors included (Lady Warriors) Miley Billie, Natalee Eaves, Kaniya Frazier, Delayla Jenkins, Trishelle John, Fantasia Lewis, Destini Tubby; (Warriors) Aiden Alex, Aven Joe, Rocky Steve, & Cassius Thompson. Best wishes to these Tribal student-athletes on your senior year & future endeavours.





### Leake Central's Flint honored

Tribal student-athlete Lexi Flint, a senior at Leake Central High School, was recognized prior to the Choctaw Central-Leake Central soccer contest on Monday, Jan. 29. She was presented a gift bag by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & was congratulated by Tribal Council members Loriann Ahshapanek, Christopher Eaves, Demando Mingo, Sam John, & LCHS soccer coach Emily Standard. They offered her best of luck on her senior year & future endeavours.



### MSMS's Wesley honored

The Mississippi School for Mathematics & Science (MSMS) held Soccer Senior Night activities on Monday, Jan. 22, in Columbus. Tribal student-athlete Chloe Wesley was amongst the seniors recognized. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Mrs. TaRita Ben presented her with a gift bag & joined her family as they offered best wishes on her senior year & future endeavours.

### CCHS hosts bowling, basketball senior night

Choctaw Central High School held Bowling/Basketball Senior Night on Friday, Jan. 26. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Tribal Council members Nigel Gibson, Sam John, Deborah Martin, & Demando Mingo joined family & friends as they congratulated the seniors & presented them with gifts. Seniors included: (bowling, Lady Warriors) Tr-

ishelle John & Aleisa Roa (not present); (basketball, Lady Warriors) Kylinn Bell, Mattison Bell, Tori Henry, Kodi Jimmie, Tessney Morris, Ashlynn Stephens, & Nataysia Willis; (Warriors) Alan John, Jr., Peyton Mingo, Jayce Sam, Zylar Thomas, Iverson Wallace, & Koie Williams. Best wishes to these Tribal student-athletes on their senior years & future endeavours. (MORE PICS NEXT PAGE)





### NCHS hosts basketball senior night

Neshoba Central High School held Basketball Senior Night on Tuesday, Jan. 23. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Mrs. TaRita Ben, & MBCI Director of Administration Jason Grisham joined family & friends as they congratulated the seniors & presented gifts. Seniors included: (Lady Rockets) Breyonce Jim, Erica Lyons, Nalani Thompson,

Katelin Williams, Kailyn Willis, & Jakaylin York; (Rockets) Kaden Bell, Brodie Ben, Jordan Ben, Michael Ben, Lamont Henry, Rick Isaac, Kameron McMillan, Isaiah Newton, & Dreydon Tubby. Best wishes to these Tribal student-athletes on their future endeavours. (MORE PICS NEXT PAGE)





### Newton County honors basketball seniors

Newton County High School held Basketball Senior Night on Friday, Jan. 26. Amongst the seniors honored were Tribal student-athletes Maeli Ben & Dominic Bell. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented gift bags & joined family members as they congratulated the seniors & offered best wishes on their future endeavours.

NCHS SENIORS ..... continued from page seventeen



### Lay honored during Lake Senior Night

Lake High School held Basketball Senior Night on Tuesday, Jan. 30, as Tribal student-athlete Lyric Lay was amongst the seniors honored. Red Water Tribal Council Representative Sam John, on behalf of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, presented a gift bag & joined family & friends as they offered well wishes on her future endeavours.



### Leake County's Chapman honored

Leake County High School held Basketball Senior Night activities on Thursday, Feb. 1. Amongst the seniors recognized was Tribal student-athlete Kaitlyn Chapman. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented a gift bag to her & joined Standing Pine Tribal Council Representative Loriann Ahshapanek, family, friends & teammates, as they offered Chapman best wishes on her senior year & future endeavours.





**Hession honored during Petal Senior Night**

On Thursday, Feb. 1, Petal High School held Basketball Senior Night as Tribal student-athlete Nathan Hession was amongst the seniors recognized. MBCI Division Director for Tribal Member Services Rick Alex presented Nathan with a gift on behalf of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben as he joined family & friends as they wished him well in his future endeavors.



**Davis signs with MGCCC**

Tribal student-athlete & Neshoba Central High School senior Jordan Davis signed a letter of intent to continue his academic & athletic career as a member of the Bulldogs Baseball team at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College in Perkinson. Davis has been a member of the Rockets' baseball team for the past six years. Davis, son of Rhea Thomas & Tywon Davis, was joined by his family, friends, teammates, coaches, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Mrs. TaRita Ben, & MBCI Director of Administration Jason Grisham as they offered best wishes on his future endeavours.



**Bell signs with Mars Hill University**

Tribal student-athlete Aizen Bell, a senior at Cherokee High School in Cherokee, NC, recently signed a letter of intent to continue his educational & athletic career as a member of the Lion's Cross Country program at Mars Hill University in Mars Hill, NC. Aizen is the son of Corey & Breanna Bell. Congratulations & best wishes on your senior season & future endeavours.

**Reed is preserving nature, her culture**

by Vickie D. King, Mississippi Today

A hint of fall touched the leaves in trees surrounding the swampy area traversed by Beaver Creek Road on Choctaw land in Neshoba County.

Mitzi Reed cruised along in her Jeep, keeping an eye out for invasive plants and wildlife. Reed is also on the lookout for her favorite critters, snakes, although she admits the weather is a bit cool for them to be out. Nevertheless, her eyes scan the swamp land adjacent to the Pearl River, just in case.



Mitzi Reed, invasive species coordinator for the Native American Fish & Wildlife Society, & member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, tells of her love for the land, holds a traditional rabbit stick made of hickory. The sticks are used for hunting.

Credit: Vickie D. King/Mississippi Today

Reed is an invasive species coordinator for the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society. Biologist, conservationist and lover of the land describes her as well. Her goal is to preserve native species and resources on the land.

“My love for the land, for being outdoors ... a lot of it had to do with my dad. He loved being outdoors. Hunting, fishing, just being in the woods, and I’d tag right along. I was like his “righthand man,” Reed says with a shrug of her shoulders and a big smile at the memory. “I got to where I loved it as well. I love animals, especially snakes,” said Reed, as she stepped off the road, scanning the ground covered in leaves. “It’s probably too cool out for them anyway, but you never know.”

“I was going to be a vet. My degree is in biology. Getting a job in Animal Control got my foot in the door. There was a Choctaw environmental program and (late) Chief (Phillip

Martin created a biologist position within the program. It opened the door for conservation-based research.”

“This area of the South is so diverse. Everything grows here. Everything thrives, and that includes invasive animals and plants. Take wild hogs for example. They eat anything and everything, and can destroy an area before moving on. What is left in their wake leaves nothing for native animals. So, they move on, too,” said Reed, holding a rabbit stick she carved.

The rabbit stick is a primitive hunting weapon made of hickory. Once a rabbit is chased from its hiding place, the rabbit stick is hurled at it. A powerful, stealthy and effective weapon.

“People are surprised to learn there are even feral horses about. And think about kudzu. Wherever you see it, it’s taking over, choking out native plants. My work encompasses all the tribes, sharing my knowledge to combat the invasion from all of it.”

# Tribal communities gain GIS skills through MSU institute

STARKVILLE, Miss.—A Mississippi State University (MSU) research institute is helping to develop geographic information systems (GIS) skills in tribal communities across the country.

An online training program established by MSU's Geosystems Research Institute in partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has provided GIS training for more than 500 individuals in tribal communities, boosting skills in land management, environmental conservation, community development and more.

The program was launched in 2023 to help the BIA meet

GIS training needs, building on previous outreach carried out by the university's research institute.

"The Mississippi State training partnership with the Branch of Geospatial Support has been extremely beneficial to the Bureau of Indian Affairs employees and Federally Recognized Tribes," said David Vogt, chief of the BIA's Branch of Geospatial Support. "It allows us to have many more students in each class than we were previously able to provide and at a lower cost. This allows more BIA employees and particularly tribes to take trainings they wouldn't have had access to before."

The two-week, self-paced classes cover key topics and software such as ArcGIS Pro,

QGIS and Python.

Roddy Nickey, director of land management and GIS for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and a two-time MSU graduate, said the training complements the GIS work he has been conducting for more than a decade and helps him stay up-to-date on the latest software tools.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians manages approximately 35,000 acres of property in the state.

"The training equips tribal and community members with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively use GIS technologies by providing hands-on training and it helps build the capacity of individuals within tribal communities to collect, analyze and visualize geospatial data, which will increase efficiency," Nickey said.

"Also, by gaining GIS expertise, individuals can pursue a career in various fields such as land management, environmental planning, emergency management and cultural resources."

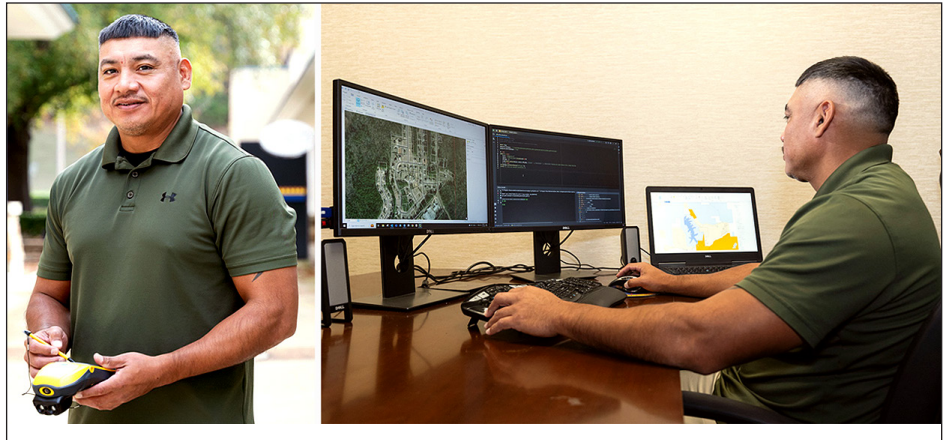
MSU's Geo-

systems Research Institute has a long track record of providing GIS training to public-and-private sector individuals through longstanding partnerships with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The GEO Project, led by Assistant Extension Professor John Cartwright and funded by NOAA's National Ocean Service's Office for Coastal Management, was created in 2006 and has provided training to more than 5,000 participants.

Dixie Cartwright, training and external facilitator for the Geosystems Research Institute, said she has been encouraged by the strong interest in GIS training from tribal communities.

"There are several benefits to adopting GIS technologies and building these skillsets among individuals," Cartwright said. "We are proud of this partnership with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and look forward to continuing to provide GIS training to tribal communities, as well as the many coastal communities we have traditionally provided this training for."



Roddy Nickey, director of land management & geographic information systems for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, uses GIS to manage the tribe's approximately 35,000 acres of land in Mississippi. (Left photo by Beth Wynn)

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 Yard sales, fundraisers, food sales, or bake sales for individuals, organizations or ball teams.  
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**CHOCTAW, MISSISSIPPI**  
**BUSINESS HOURS**  
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**Pearl River Insurance Agency**  
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 mark.patrick1136@gmail.com

For more information on the Geo Project, visit [www.gri.msstate.edu/GEO](http://www.gri.msstate.edu/GEO)



### CECILLIYA FRANCEYNE WESLEY

Funeral services for Cecilliya Franceyne Wesley, 18, was held on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, at the Pearl River CERF Building. Pastor Samuel Dixon officiated.



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

Ms. Wesley passed away on Jan. 2 at her residence.

A resident of Escatawpa, Miss., she enjoyed playing her ukulele, baking, spending time with cousins & friends, singing, listening to music, watching TikToks, & doing her makeup.

She is preceded in death by her grandparents, John & Cecilia Wesley, Thomas & Frances Robbins, Leland Lewis, Sr.; sisters, Cionora Mioka Sockey & Hope Xena Wesley; brother, Bryant Craig Wesley; 2 aunts & six uncles.

Survivors include her parents, Jerry & Patricia Cotton Wesley; grandmother, Pauline Cotton Jefferson; sister, Natasha (Ron) Wesley-LaSarge; brothers, Warren Wesley & Bailey Wesley; niece, Talia Wesley; nephews, Brydon Wesley-LaSarge & Aiden Wesley; special friends, Angie Hand & Bishop Moore; 3 aunts, 1 uncle, & a host of relatives & friends.

### CRYSTAL DAWN WILLIAMS

Funeral services for Crystal Dawn Williams, 39, was held on Sunday, January 7, 2024, at

the Henning (TN) Facility Building. Bro. Rocky Gilliam officiated.

Burial was in the Williams Cemetery. Currie Funeral Home Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Williams passed away on Jan. 3.

A resident of Ripley, Tenn., she was employed by Komatsu America Corporation in Ripley for the past 2 years. She was a hard worker & always had a smile. As a child, she loved playing softball, singing & playing the piano. She was a huge Alabama Crimson Tide fan. She was loved by many & thought the world of her children.

She is preceded in death by her brother, Darrell Bell.

Survivors include her parents, Louis & Bonnie Williams; daughter, Marlee Williams; sons, Braylen (Jade) Williams & Blake Williams; sisters, Wendy Williams, Kelly Jackson, & Vickie Williams; nieces, Karla Wright & Ashley Hulderman; nephew, Landon Walton; great-nephew, Silas Hulderman; & a host of relatives & friends.

### TERRY PARKERSON

Funeral services for Terrance "Terry" Morgan Parkerson, 65, was held on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at the John E. Stephens Chapel. Deacon Ricky Thompson, Sr. & Rev. Leonard Jimmie officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.



Mr. Parkerson passed away on Jan. 4 at UAB Hospital in Birmingham.

He was a Baptist by faith & a U.S. Air Force Veteran. He served as a Police Officer for the Choctaw Police Department, then Department Director for the MBCI Department of Public Safety & Tribal Protective Services for more than 25 years. He enjoyed spending time with his grandchildren & great-grandchild, playing golf & fishing.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Lee Austin Parkerson & Helen Eisenmenger Woods.

Survivors include his wife, Lola D. McMillan Parkerson; sons, Anzlum (Shasta) Parkerson, Arral (Sunny) Parkerson, & Lee Parkerson; sisters, Cissy Lehr, Jackie Ganote, Trisha Dunn, & Tina McGurick; brothers, John Parkerson, Tate Parkerson, Mike Parkerson, Josh Parkerson, & Tony Parkerson; 10 grandchildren & 1 great-grandchild.

### SCOTT BRISCOE, JR.

Funeral services for Scott Briscoe, Jr., 59, was held on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at the Bogue Homa CERF Building. Bro. Mike Walker officiated.

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

Mr. Briscoe passed away on Jan. 7 at his residence.

He enjoyed being with family, playing cornhole at family gatherings, going to concerts, watching sports, especially Cleveland Browns & Mississippi State football. He was an avid runner & enjoyed participating in marathons & playing softball.



He is preceded in death in death by his parents, Scott Briscoe, Sr. & Shirley Chapman Briscoe; & brother, Kevin Briscoe.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Bishop Briscoe; sister, Beverly (Ray) Murphy; brothers, Robert "Bob" (Rochelle) Briscoe, Greg Briscoe, & Jonah Bell; an aunt, uncles, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

### FREEMAN CLEMONS

Funeral services for Freeman Clemons, 53, was held on Monday, January 15, 2024, at Macedonia Baptist Church in Conehatta. Bro. Shelly Peoples officiated.

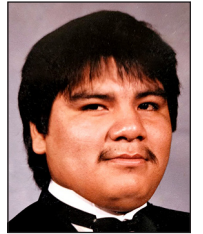
Burial was in the Conehatta Community Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Clemons passed away on Jan. 10 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

He enjoyed being with family & friends. He was a traditional Choctaw dance chanter & performed with various social dance groups. He enjoyed watching football games, especially the Dallas Cowboys, Choctaw stickball games, & pro wrestling.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Raymond Frazier & Vicky Clemons; a brother, Edward Lee Clemons; & an aunt, Catherine Clemons Jim.

Survivors include his mother, Ivora Johnson; sisters, Iris Clemons (George) Thomas & Lisa (Jeremy) Vaughn; a brother, Timothy Y. Thomas; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.



**OBITUARIES** ..... continued from page twenty-one

**EDNA FAYE WILLIS**

Funeral services for Edna Faye Willis, 62, was held on Saturday, January 20, 2024, at her residence at 72 McFarland Road in Bogue Homa. Bro. Mark Patrick officiated.



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

Ms. Willis passed away on Jan. 12 at South Central Regional Hospital in Laurel.

She lived most of her life in Bogue Homa & enjoyed listening to country music, doing puzzle books, being helpful to others, & spending time with her family.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Wilkie & Bernice Frazier; & a daughter, Carolyn Allaine Smith.

She is survived by her husband Dan Willis; daughter, Marion Smith; son, Eric Smith; sister, Valerie Kaminski; brothers, Wilkie Frazier, Jr., & Paul Frazier; 3 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, & a host of relatives & friends.

**JERRY LEE STEVE**

Funeral services for Jerry Lee Steve, 77, was held on Friday, January 26, 2024, at the Conehatta CERF Building. Bro. Tim Tubby officiated.



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

Mr. Steve passed away on

Jan. 19 at Retreat Hospice in Mobile, Ala.

He spent part of his adult life working in the oilfield industry, then at Choctaw Electronics in Conehatta for several years. He enjoyed watching his beloved Dallas Cowboys, playing cards, & telling stories with family & friends. He cherished his dogs & treated them as if they were extra children.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Sarah Jane Stephens & Curtis Steve; wife, Norma Steve; stepchildren, Charles Briscoe, Herman Smith, John Smith, & Cynthia Smith Dixon; & a granddaughter, Hayley Steve.

He is survived by his children, Cherie Steve, Cheryl Steve Smith, Kimberly Steve, & Kevin (Tasha) Steve; stepdaughter, Sharlene Vasquez; sister, Veneda Webster; a host of grandchildren, nieces, nephew, a great-grandson, Tushka Young, & great-granddaughters, Sienna Nichols & Mila Steve.

**SANDRA BEN WISHORK**

Funeral services for Sandra Ben Wishork, 59, was held on Thursday, January 25, 2024, at the Pearl River CERF Building. Minister Curtis Willis, Sr. & Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.



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

Ms. Wishork passed away on Jan. 21 at the Choctaw Health Center in Choctaw.

She enjoyed being with family, watching football, listening to music, & dancing.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Chester & Margaret Marie Billy Ben; a brother, Alan Ben; a grandchild, Tayzen Cutler; & a great-grandchild, Jamari Denson.

Survivors include her daughters, Hannah Wishork, Kimberly Wishork, & Heather Wishork; sisters, Juana Ben, Lorna Ben, Olivia Ben, Sharon Ben, & Kathryn Ben; a brother, Carlos Ben, Sr.; 12 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, & a host of relatives & friends.

**PEGGY SUE SHUMAKE**

Funeral services for Peggy Sue Shumake, 58, was held on Monday, January 29, 2024, at Macedonia Baptist Church in Conehatta. Bro. Brian Parkman officiated.



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

Ms. Shumake passed away on Jan. 23 at her residence.

She enjoyed being with family & friends, telling jokes, listening to the radio, & watching TV.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Edmond Shumake & Berdie Mae Jefferson Shumake; sister, Patty Jefferson; brothers, Arthur Shumake, John Shumake, & Norman Shumake; 5 grandchildren, & 3 nephews.

Survivors include her daughter, Deanna Jim; sons, Thomas Jim, Jr. & Todd Jim; sister, Lora Denson; brother, Lee Earl Shumake, Sr.; an aunt, Juanita Shoemake; a good friend, Ronnie Willis; 11 grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**LERAN JEFFERSON, SR.**

Funeral services for Leran Jefferson, Sr., 59, was held on Monday, January 29, 2024, at Stonewall Baptist Church in Conehatta. Pastor Robert 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 Jan. 25 at his residence.

He worked in the poultry business most of his life. He enjoyed being with his family & grandchildren, playing cards & washers.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Goldman & Millie Dixon Jefferson; sons, Marcus Jefferson & Arman Jefferson, Sr.; sisters, Mary Sue Jefferson, Sylvia Johnson, & Cindy Jefferson; brothers, Robert Jefferson & Bobby Jefferson; & grandchildren, Marques Jefferson, Antone Jefferson, & Kay-lub Jefferson.

Survivors include his daughter, Tabatha Charlie; sons, Jobie Charlie, Leran Jefferson, Jr., & Javean Jefferson; sister, Minnie Shoemake; special companion, Dyranna Thomas; aunt, Melba Jefferson; uncle, Hubert Jefferson; 11 grandchildren; 1 great-grandchild; & a host of relatives & friends.

**JOEY JOE**

Funeral services for Joey Joe, 58, was held on Thursday, February 1, 2024, at the Tucker CERF Building. Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.

Burial was in the Nanih

continued next page

Waiya Menonite Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.



Mr. Joe passed away on Jan. 27 at The Bluffs Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center in Vicksburg.

He was a member of Jesus New Covenant Church. He made Tucker community his home & was known for his generosity, jokes, & kindness. He enjoyed being with his grandson, family & friends, watching his favorite TV shows, & playing the guitar. He was employed at a sawmill in Noxapater, Miss., then at Pearl River Resort.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Munch Joe & Emma Frazier Joe; stepmother, Cecilia Frazier Joe; sisters, Nellie Joe, Catherine John, & Betty Mae Joe; brothers, Eddie Dee Joe, Reed Joe, & James "Cornbread" Frazier; mother of his children, Debbie Jefferson Joe; a special son, Dylan "Dodi" Nickey; infant Baby Joe; & infant Grandbaby Jones.

Survivors include daughters, Cecilia Renee Joe Bennett, Marilina Nicole Joe, & Hillary Saline Joe; sisters, Addie Sue Joe & Joyce Hickman; a grandson, Hezaiah Amir Bennett; soon to be Grandbaby Jones; an uncle, John Frazier; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**CHARLES DWIGHT FARMER**

Funeral services for Charles Dwight Farmer, 62, was held on Friday, February 2, 2024, at Hope Indian Baptist Church in Pearl River. Deacon



Williamson Isaac & Bro. Shelly Peoples officiated.

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

Mr. Farmer passed away on Jan. 29 at Laird Hospital in Union.

He resided in Standing Pine & attended Hopewell Baptist Church. He was a carpenter then worked in shipping/receiving. He enjoyed watching movies, listening to music, food, & being on social media.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Robert & Eunice Johnson Farmer; & a stepgrandson, Christian Steve.

Survivors include his daughter, Sandee Farmer; son, Sean Farmer; stepson, Aaron Steve; sisters, Deborah Tubby, Cynthia Isaac, Trudy Farmer; a grandson, ZaRyus Farmer; stepgranddaughter, Angel Steve; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**AARON RANDALL THOMAS**

Funeral services for Aaron Randall Thomas, 45, was held on Friday, February 2, 2024, at the John E. Stephens Chapel in Philadelphia.



Bro. Jim Daniels & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

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

Mr. Thomas passed away on Jan. 29 at Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

He was a member of First Church of God. He loved his collection of childhood figurines & enjoyed reading.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Woodrow & Corine Farmer Thomas, Tom &

Mattie Henry Bell.

Survivors include parents, Ray & Ruby Bell Thomas; sisters, Priscilla Thomas, Shaundareka Thomas & Rhea Thomas; aunts, Nan Whiteman & Selma Johnson; uncles, Walter Thomas & William Thomas; & numerous nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

**ARKEKETA DARNELL CLEMONS**

Funeral services for Arkeketa Darnell Clemons, 38, was held on Friday, February 9, 2024, at Bogue Chitto Baptist Church. Rev. Charles Doby Henry & Rev. Samuel Dixon officiated.



Burial was in the Bogue


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

Ms. Clemons passed away on Jan. 31 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

She lived all her life in the Bogue Chitto community. She enjoyed being with her children & nephew, & texting family & friends.

She is preceded in death by her grandparents, Tom Amos, Mazelle John, Prentiss & Alice Clemons.

Survivors include her mother, Fannie Sue Tubby; daughters, Keyonna Paten & Keira Paten; son, Nicholas Paten; sister, Madelin Amos; brother, Cody Amos; 4 aunts, 3 uncles, & a host of relatives & friends.



**LIVING WATER**  
UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

**LOCATED IN THE TUCKER COMMUNITY**  
*(Adjacent up the hill from Tucker Elementary School)*

*We invite you and your family to join our family for services.*

**SUNDAY SERVICES - 2:00 pm**  
**TUESDAY EVENINGS - 6:00 pm**

*Come & Worship with us*



**MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH**  
130 Campus Drive  
Conehatta, MS 39057

**SUNDAY SCHEDULE**

10:00 a.m.	Sunday School
11:00 a.m.	Worship Service
5:00 p.m.	Evening Service
1st Sunday Service	4:00 p.m.

Pastor: Rev. Samuel Dixon

**WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE**

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


To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."  
John 8:31-32

**Welcome To**



**10341 Road 789**  
**Philadelphia, MS 39350**  
Sunday Service: 10:00 a.m.

*Come Join Us...*



*Spirit of Life*  
**CHRISTIAN CENTER**

**SUNDAY: 10:00 a.m. WEDNESDAY: 6:30 p.m.**

**278 Black Jack Road**  
**Choctaw, MS 39350**  
**601-389-5446**  
*Pastor Thomas Ben*

# Sound the Alarm event held in Choctaw

Are you prepared for a home fire? According to officials, home fires claim seven lives every day, but having working smoke alarms can cut the risk of death by half.

The American Red Cross, working with the Choctaw Fire Department, participated in the nationwide Sound the Alarm event on Friday, January 19, with the objective of raising awareness of the dangers of house fires and installing

free smoke detectors in Tribal homes on MBCI Tribal lands.

Most of us don't realize we have just two minutes to escape a home fire - which is the nation's most frequent disaster. The American Red Cross is preparing families to act quickly through their Home Fire Campaign.

Beginning in the Pearl River community, six teams comprised of officials and volunteers from the Red Cross and Choctaw Fire Department traveled throughout the community to inform Tribal residents about having up to date and proper working smoke detectors in the household.

If a household did not have a smoke detector or one that wasn't operational, one was installed for free if needed.

*Choctaw Fire Department & American Red Cross teamed up to provide free smoke detectors to Tribal homes.*



**ABOVE,** Choctaw Fire Department personnel installed over 50 smoke detectors in the Pearl River community as part of the Sound the Alarm initiative on Friday, Jan. 19.

**RIGHT,** Members of the Choctaw Fire Department & the American Red Cross participated in the Sound the Alarm initiative on Friday, Jan. 19, as they visited homes in the Pearl River community & informed Tribal households about fire safety & installed free smoke detectors if needed. Participating in the event were Gabriel Bell, Marco Patrick, Anthony Acy, Melody Storgaard, Zoey Anderson, Glen Billie, Darius Jackson, Brandis Johnson, Scott Smith, Glen Dixon, Samuel Farve, Barry Harrison, John Brown, Mark Anderton, & Linda Williams.



## CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

**JANUARY 2024**

© 2024 MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS

Over 50 alarms were installed in residences that will help protect over 100 people in Pearl River.

Every home needs a working smoke detector. You may need a new one if it doesn't work when tested or if it is over 10 years old.

To check your smoke detector, press the "test" button, listen for 3 beeps to indicate it's operational, and check the date to see if it's less than 10 years old.

Officials say smoke detectors need to be placed in every sleeping area and on every level of a home. Also, if it is found to be malfunctioning, it needs

to be promptly replaced.

This spring, more Sound the Alarm events will be hosted in the Tribal communities. During the upcoming Choctaw Tribal Schools' Spring Festivals, officials with the Choctaw Fire Department will be in attendance to sign up families who want to receive a free smoke detector and have it installed in their homes.

For more information or to arrange a schedule to install a smoke detector, Tribal homeowners can contact Choctaw Fire Department Liaison Officer Marco Patrick at (601) 656-0620 or email marco.patrick@choctaw.org.