



Tribe makes \$1B annual impact on state

A recent economic impact analysis shows the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MBCI) has an almost \$1 billion annual impact on the state's economy.

"This study demonstrates the significant role our Tribe plays in the economic health of Mississippi. We are proud of our contributions and remain committed to fostering growth and opportunities for all," said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben.

Mississippi State University recently completed the economic study to determine the Tribe's impact on the state. The study examined spending from several categories, including new construction expenditures, commercial operations, government operations, human capital investment & tourism spending.

Based on 2022 expenditures, MBCI activities, visitors & graduates increased state output by \$980 million,

see **IMPACT**, pg. 9

CTS utilizing electric buses

The Choctaw Tribal School System has officially gone green with the addition of nine electric school buses designed to be emissions-free, noise pollution-free and fossil fuel-free to its transportation fleet in the 2024-2025 school year.

Manufactured by Thomas Built Buses (TBB) of High Point, NC, the Saf-T-Liner C2 Jouley buses can carry 81 passengers and features a 244 kWh standard battery capacity and 295 peak horsepower. It features over-the-air battery management software updates and has bilateral V2G capability.

The buses are powered by lithium-ion

batteries made by Proterra, a leading manufacturer of electric batteries and drive-trains. Inside each battery pack are thousands of small-format cylindrical cells that power the bus's components, including a 2-speed Eaton transmission and a UQM Powerphase 220 motor.

Batteries can be recharged either throughout the day or at the end of the day. Charging stations are located across from the MBCI Attorney General's Office in Choctaw, and at each Tribal School campus in the outlying communities.

see **ELECTRIC BUSES**, pg. 12



Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, along with members of the Choctaw Tribal Council, Tribal Administration, Department of Schools, & School Transportation officials got a first hand experience riding one of the Saf-T-Liner C2 Jouley electric buses being utilized by the Choctaw Tribal Schools in the 2024-2025 school year.

Warriors def. Braves for Battle of Nations win

Congratulations to the Choctaw Central Warriors as they defeated the Cherokee Braves

26-13 to bring home the 2024 Battle of Nations trophy. The game was played in Cherokee, NC, on Friday, Sept. 6. Despite going winless in the 2023 season, the Warriors reeled off four consecutive wins against Union, Cherokee, Philadelphia, & Lake to start off the 2024 season before losing a close contest at Bay Springs 26-20 on Thursday, Sept. 26. After an open date, the Warriors are set to compete in 4-4A division games with hopes of earning a playoff berth. Upcoming games include: Friday, Oct. 11 at Newton County; Friday, Oct. 18 vs. Leake Central (Homecoming); Friday, Oct. 25 at West Lauderdale; & Thursday, Oct. 31 vs. Northeast Lauderdale (Senior Night).





Halito!
 The temperatures have begun to cool, and the days and evenings are becoming more pleasant. Many of our local sports teams are heading into playoff rounds, and we couldn't be more proud of our outstanding Tribal athletes. As always, I encourage family members to support your youth by attending sports events, band concerts, academic competitions, and other school activities. Knowing that their biggest supporters

are in the audience may just be the biggest boost in confidence they need to succeed.

I am proud of our CCHS Mighty Warriors football team as they have been having a great season. They are currently 4-1 in standing, and we hope to see them head to the playoffs in a few weeks. Thank you to Head Coach Edward Routh and his coaching staff for their hard work and efforts in getting our Warriors prepared for each game. Thank you to the fans for your loyal support of our young men. Go Warriors!

The gold trophy came home to Choctaw, Mississippi following the annual Battle of Nations game between our Warriors and the Cherokee High School Braves. It was a great game and time spent with our Native brethren from the East-



Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, along with several representatives of the Choctaw Tribal Council in attendance, escorted team captains of the Choctaw Central Warriors onto the football field at Ray Kinsland Stadium for the coin toss of the annual Battle of Nations contest with the Cherokee Braves on Friday, Sept. 6, in Cherokee, N.C.

ern Band of Cherokee Indians. Thank you to the EBCI for your hospitality during our stay, and we look forward to hosting you at home next year at Warrior Stadium.

Congratulations to Team Rogue and to Bok Cito for

their victories in the Women's and Men's Stickball Championships, respectively, at the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Labor Day Festival Stickball Tournament in Tushkahomma,

continued next page

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.

Pictured, from left to right, are Stickball MVP's Denise Denson & Brandon Jimmie. Pictured below are women's champions Team Rogue & men's champion Bok Cito as they participated in the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma's Labor Day Festival Stickball Tournament.





Case files donated to Tribal Archives

Denise Navicky, great-granddaughter of the late attorney W.T. Weir, recently donated his collection of case files to be housed at Choctaw Tribal Archives. Mr. Weir performed legal services for the Tribe during the 1950's. The files were presented on Tuesday, September 3rd, 2024, at the Chahta Immi Cultural Center's (CICC) Media Room in Choctaw. Ms. Navicky was presented an authentic double-weave

Choctaw basket as a token of appreciation on behalf of the Tribe. Pictured above, from left to right, are Tribal Archivist Eddie Johnson, 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen, Denise Navicky, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Department of Chahta Immi Director Jay Wesley, & CICC Guest Relations Coordinator/Acting CICC Coordinator Cynthia Massey.

Okla. Congratulations also to Women's MVP Denise Denson and to Men's MVP Brandon Jimmie.

A ribbon cutting was held for the Tribal TANF and Child Support Services Programs on Monday, September 9th at the Choctaw Town Center. I appreciate the hard work and efforts of the staff at these two programs as they assist Tribal members who need their services.

We had a visit from actor, singer, and motivational speaker Gary "Litefoot" Davis, on Friday, September 20th (pictured below). I am grateful to Litefoot for his words of encouragement to our students at Choctaw Central High and

Middle Schools. It is great to see a successful Native professional like Litefoot giving back to the Native community through the power of motivation. I wish him continued success in his work.

The MBCI Boys and Girls Club hosted a wonderful Day for Kids on Saturday, September 21st at the CCHS Warrior Field. As a father myself, I know how important it is to spend meaningful times with your children and have fun together as a family. Day for Kids offers that opportunity. Thank you to the Boys and Girls Club staff, other Tribal programs, and volunteers for your efforts in making this year's event a big success.

I am very honored to have had the opportunity to meet with our Choctaw youth seniors and Homecoming Court members throughout our local schools. We have talented and accomplished students, and it is my honor to recognize them as they celebrate milestones in their high school or college lives. The student recognitions that have been made thus far are included in this edition of the Community News.

American Indian Week was well-celebrated, with traditional activities, games, food, and princess and brave pageants held by the Boys and Girls Club, Department of Early Childhood Education, Choctaw Elderly Activity Center, and the Choctaw Tribal Schools. Congratulations to all of the princess and brave winners and we applaud all of the participants of these pageants.

It takes a lot of work and time to organize these pageants, so I commend the pageant coordinators and committee members for their efforts. Thank you to the parents, guardians, and Tribal artisans who took the time and care to make sure pageant participants looked their very best in their traditional Choctaw attire and accessories.

Thank you for promoting and preserving our Choctaw traditions for the future.

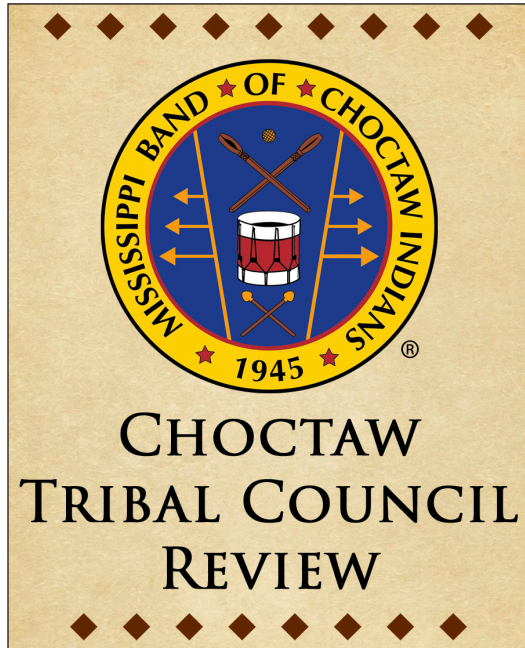
Progress continues in full swing around our Tribal lands. The construction of our new Choctaw Central campus is moving forward at a steady pace. I can hardly wait for our high school students, faculty, and staff to move into their new "home" and be working and learning in a modern, state-of-the-art facility. Other projects have begun and will be nearing completion in the coming months. Check out our Tribal Facebook page and/or this and future editions of the Community News for details.

We hope you make plans to attend the feast in November. I'm always looking forward to seeing my fellow Tribal members and getting to speak and catch up on what's been happening with many of you. Thank you as always for your support and prayers, and I wish you and your loved ones a wonderful fall season!

Chi Yakokilih,

Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief





**SPECIAL CALL MEETING
JUNE 27, 2024**

RESOLUTION CHO 24-079(B), approving a residential lease for M. Anderson & R. Anderson in the Conehatta Community, was ADOPTED - 13 YES (*L. Ahshapanek, R. Anderson, Sr., C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Mingo, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, B. Steve, K. Wesley, D. Wilson*); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT (*D. Martin, H. Nickey, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wallace*).

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves a residential lease for Mallory & Rodgrick Anderson in the Conehatta Community. For more information, please contact the Realty Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-080(B), approving a land use permit for M. Steve & T. Steve, Jr. in the Standing Pine Community, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves a one year land use permit to Melody & Terry Steve, Jr., in the Standing Pine Community. For more information, please contact the Realty Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-081, designating a site in the Bogue Chitto Community for a Choctaw Fire Department Communications Tower, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the designation of a site in the Bogue Chitto Community for planning & development to improve public safety communications infrastructure by installing a communications tower in the Bogue Chitto communi-*

ty. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Fire Department.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-082, designating a site in the Pearl River Community for an Air Quality Monitoring Station, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *For more information, please contact Public Works.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-083, endorsing the formation of a new Inter Tribal Organization composed of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians & the Seminole Tribe of Florida, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the endorsement of the formation of a new Inter Tribal Organization comprised of United South & Eastern Tribes, Inc. ("USET") four founding member nations (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, & the Seminole Tribe of Florida) to elevate issues of common concern that may not be of interest to USET's 29 other member nations. For more information, please contact the Office of the Tribal Chief.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-084, approving a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians & the City of Louisville, Mississippi, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves a Memorandum of Understanding between the MBCI & the City of Louisville, Miss., setting forth terms & conditions under which the City of Louisville, Miss., will extend police & fire protection to the MBCI's new gaming facility. For more information, please contact the Office of the Attorney General.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-085, designating the Choctaw Tribal Schools' Maintenance Department as Project Management Lead for the Choctaw Tribal Schools' Improvement & Repair Projects funded by Public Law 100-297 Tribally Controlled Schools Act Grants, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Tribe recognizes the need to maintain the properties & buildings to a standard that allows for effective educational services to be delivered while ensuring the safety & security of all chil-*

dren & staff. For more information, please contact the Department of Schools.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-086, approving the 2024-2025 Budget for the Choctaw Tribal Schools, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

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

RESOLUTION CHO 24-087, approving the 2024-2025 Policy Handbooks for the Choctaw Tribal Schools, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the 2024-2025 Policy Handbooks for the Choctaw Tribal School System: (1) 2024-2025 Choctaw Tribal Schools Parent & Student Handbook; (2) 2024-2025 Choctaw Tribal Schools Staff Handbook; (3) 2024-2025 Choctaw Central Dormitory Student Handbook; (4) 2024-2025 Choctaw Central Dormitory Staff Handbook; (5) 2024-2025 Choctaw Virtual Learning Center Handbook, & (6) 2024-2025 Career & Technical Education Center Handbook. For more information, please contact the Department of Schools.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-088, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to submit an application for grant funding from the fiscal sponsors of the Just Transition Fund, was ADOPTED - 15 YES (*L. Ahshapanek, R. Anderson, Sr., C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Martin, D. Mingo, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, B. Steve, K. Wallace, K. Wesley, D. Wilson*); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT (*H. Nickey, T. Thomas, Sr.*)

SUMMARY: *The grant funding is to support rural & Tribal communities preparing to apply for federal & state broadband funding to engage with additional experts in the field of broadband planning. For more information, please contact the Office of Economic Development.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-089, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Department of Chahta Immi to apply for grant funding from First Nations Development Institute, was ADOPTED - 13 YES (*L. Ahshapanek, R. Anderson, Sr., C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Mingo, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, B. Steve, K. Wesley, D. Wilson*); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT (*D. Martin, H. Nickey, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wallace*).

continued next page

SUMMARY: *The Resolution authorizes the MBCI to apply for grant funding from First Nations Development Institute. The Department of Chahta Immi will develop the Elder Talk Cultural Connection Video Series, which includes a series of videos about the intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge. For more information, please contact the Department of Chahta Immi.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-090, certifying a list of persons eligible for appointment to serve as Choctaw Supreme Court Justices Pro-Tem, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution certifies a list of persons eligible for appointment to serve as Choctaw Supreme Court Justices Pro-Tem: (Judges of the Choctaw Tribal Courts) - Hon. Peggy Gibson, Hon. Rita Mattered, Hon. Drew Taylor, Hon. Holly Peters; (Judges from outside the Choctaw Tribal Courts) - Hon. Joshua Breedlove, Hon. Christopher A. Collins, Hon. Cheryl Fairbanks, Hon. N. Cheryl Hamby. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Tribal Courts.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-091, confirming the judicial appointment of Jeffrey Webb as Civil Court Judge to the Choctaw Tribal Courts, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *For more information, please contact the Choctaw Tribal Courts.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-092, authorizing a Memorandum of Agreement between the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Department of Family & Community Services, Choctaw Food Distribution Program & the Mississippi Department of Human Services - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, was ADOPTED - 13 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Memorandum of Agreement is needed to prevent & detect dual participation in MBCI's Food Distribution Program, & the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program operated by the Mississippi Department of Human Services. For more information, please contact the Department of Family & Community Services.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-093, approving a Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program Policy & Procedures Manual, was ADOPTED - 15 YES (L. Ahshapanek, R. Anderson, Sr., C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Mar-

tin, D. Mingo, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, B. Steve, K. Wallace, K. Wesley, D. Wilson); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT (H. Nickey, T. Thomas, Sr.).

SUMMARY: *For more information, please contact the Department of Family & Community Services.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-094, approving the Nittak Himmona Domestic Violence Shelter Program Policy & Procedures Manual, was ADOPTED - 13 YES (L. Ahshapanek, R. Anderson, Sr., C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Mingo, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, B. Steve, K. Wesley, D. Wilson); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 4 ABSENT (D. Martin, H. Nickey, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wallace).

SUMMARY: *For more information, please contact the Department of Family & Community Services.*

REGULAR CALL MEETING JULY 9, 2024

ORDINANCE NO. 24-006, repealing Resolution CHO 19-001 & enacting this Ordinance Amending Title I, II, III, & VII of the Choctaw Tribal Code to implement Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction under the Federal Violence Against Women Act (2022), was ENACTED - 16 YES (L. Ahshapanek, R. Anderson, Sr., C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Martin, D. Mingo, H. Nickey, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, B. Steve, K. Wallace, K. Wesley, D. Wilson); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT (T. Thomas, Sr.).

SUMMARY: *The Ordinance approves amending Title I, II, III, & VII of the Choctaw Tribal Code to implement the Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction under the Federal Violence Against Women Act (2022). For more information, please contact the Office of the Attorney General.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-095(B), approving an absolute relinquishment of membership in the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *In accordance with Title XXII-Tribal Enrollment Code, Section §22-4-1, provides that any adult MBCI Tribal member may voluntarily relinquish their MBCI Tribal membership. The Tribal Enrollment Committee approved the request to absolutely relinquish MBCI tribal membership for one individual. For more information, please contact the Office of*

Tribal Enrollment.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-096(B), approving increases in blood degree & name changes for previously enrolled Tribal members, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *In accordance with Title XXII-Tribal Enrollment Code, Section §22-2-8, provides that MBCI Tribal members may apply to increase their blood degree based on new or additional information about paternity or maternity & Section §22-3-1, of the Tribal Enrollment Code provides that MBCI Tribal members may change their names as they appear in MBCI's enrollment records by submitting certain documents. The Tribal Enrollment Committee approved the increases in blood degree & name change for (5) MBCI Tribal members. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-097(B), enrolling Tribal members, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the enrollment of 45 new MBCI Tribal members. With the adoption of this Resolution, there are 11,063 enrolled members of MBCI. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-098, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Choctaw Loan Program to apply for the Preservation & Reinvestment Initiative for Community Enhancement Grant from the U.S Department of Housing & Urban Development, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution authorizes the MBCI's Choctaw Loan Program to apply for the Preservation & Reinvestment Initiative for Community Enhancement Grant from the U.S Department of Housing & Urban Development to improve the condition of manufactured housing on the MBCI Reservation. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Loan Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-099, approving the Choctaw Community Fund Policies & Procedures, was ADOPTED - ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the Choctaw Community Fund Policies & Procedures to clarify who can apply, the application process, selection process,*



RESOLUTIONS continued from page five

& disbursement process for the Choctaw Community Fund. For more information, please contact the Development Division.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-100, authorizing Bridge Loan Financing from Trustmark National Bank for construction of the new Choctaw Central Campus, was ADOPTED - ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: For more information, please contact the Office of Finance & Accounting.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-101, affirming citizen participation & authorizing the Choctaw Housing Authority to apply for an Indian Community Development Block Grant from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Choctaw Housing Authority intends to apply for the Indian Community Development Block Grant from HUD to partially fund repairs & renovations to housing stock in their inventory. For more information, please contact Choctaw Housing Authority.

**SPECIAL CALL MEETING
AUGUST 28, 2024**

ORDINANCE NO. 24-007, amending Article C., Section (1) of the Charter of Incorporation issued to OKLAHIKBIH, Inc., was ENACTED - 16 YES (L. Ahshapanek, R. Anderson, Sr., C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Martin, D. Mingo, H. Nickey, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr. K. Wallace, K. Wesley, D. Wilson); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT (B. Steve).

SUMMARY: The Ordinance approves amending Article C., Section (1) of the Charter of Incorporation issued to OKLAHIKBIH, Inc. as follows:

C. Board of Directors
Section (1) Number, Tenure & Qualifications. The Corporation shall be governed by three to five directors who shall be enrolled members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. At all times, the directors of this corporation shall be the same people as those who serve as the Directors of the Chahta Holding Group, Incorporated, & for the same terms & each shall serve until their suc-

cessors shall have been elected & qualified. No member of the Tribal Council of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians shall be permitted to serve on the Board of Directors.

For more information, please contact the Office of the Attorney General.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-102, designating Intertribal Holdings, LLC as the "Implementing Entity" responsible for administrating the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) Funding Award authorized by Tribal Council Resolution CHO 22-111, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: For more information, please contact the Office of Economic Development.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-103, approving Fiscal Year 2025 Operating & Capital Budgets for the Choctaw Ordinance 56 Tribal Enterprises, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves fiscal year 2025 Operating & Capital Budgets for the Choctaw Ordinance 56 Tribal Enterprises as set forth below:

Enterprise - Choctaw Resort Development Enterprise; **Operating** - \$251,396,781; **Capital** - \$35,763,439.

Enterprise - Chahta Enterprise; **Operating** - \$2,551,215; **Capital** - \$75,000.

Enterprise - Choctaw Shopping Center Enterprise; **Operating** - \$2,120,000; **Capital** - \$450,000.

For more information, please contact the Office of Finance and Accounting.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-104, approving a Jail Utilization Contract with Leake County, Mississippi for housing non-Indian inmates, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the Jail Utilization Contract & sets forth the terms & conditions under which Leake County, Miss., will house non-Indian offenders within MBCI's Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction at the Leake County Correctional Facility. For more information, please contact the Department of Public Safety.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-105, authorizing applications for Originating Agency Identifiers from the Criminal Justice Information Services Systems Agency at the U.S. Department of Justice, was AD-

OPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution authorizes the MBCI to apply for an Originating Agency Identifier ("ORI") which will allow access to the National Crime Information Center ("NCIC") database. The MBCI Tribal Programs will benefit having access to the NCIC database since MBCI is implementing measures to prosecute non-Indian offenders in accordance with the conditions for exercising Special Tribal Criminal Jurisdiction set forth in 25 U.S.C. §1304 & allow MBCI to conduct investigations since 25 U.S.C §3207 requires that Indian Tribes with self-determination contracts conduct character investigations for all foster care placements & positions that involve regular contact with, or control over Indian children. For more information, please contact the Office of the Attorney General.

**SPECIAL CALL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2024**

RESOLUTION CHO 24-106, authorizing a Distribution of Tribal Funds, was ADOPTED - 14 YES (L. Ahshapanek, R. Anderson, Sr., C. Eaves, N. Gibson, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Martin, G. Shoemake, R. Sockey, T. Thomas, Sr. K. Wallace, K. Wesley); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT (D. Mingo, H. Nickey, D. Wilson).

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the Distribution of Funds & authorizes the Tribal Chief to promulgate procedures & to conduct the distribution of \$600.00 per Tribal member on December 5, 2024. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Distribution.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-107, approving Fiscal Year 2025 Budgets for the Choctaw Health Center, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: The Resolution approves the Fiscal Year 2025 Budgets for the CHC as set forth below:

Indian Health Service Self-Governance Compact, \$59,400,120;

Health Related Grants Authorized by the Tribe, \$4,171,661;

General Health Fund, \$7,500,000;

Medicaid & Medicare Fund,

continued next page



Bank awards \$1M in Native American Housing Grants

The Federal Home Loan Bank of Dallas (Bank) recently awarded \$1 million in grants to seven Tribally Designated Housing Entities (TDHEs) through its Native American Housing Opportunities (NAHO) Fund. The funds were awarded through six participating member institutions.

The Bank introduced the NAHO Fund this year to address the housing needs of federally recognized tribes and TDHEs through grants of \$50,000 to \$150,000 per application. All grant recipients were sponsored by Bank members.

Below is a list of the awardees, including the members that facilitated the grants:

LOUISIANA

Charenton - (member) First National Bank Jeanerette; (sponsor) Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana; (grant) \$150,000.

MISSISSIPPI

Choctaw - (member) The Citizens Bank; (sponsor) Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; (grant) \$150,000.

NEW MEXICO

Espanola - (member) Del Norte Credit Union; (sponsor) Santa Clara Pueblo Housing Authority; (grant) \$150,000.

Pueblo of Jemez - (member) Wells Fargo; (sponsor) Pueblo of Jemez Housing Authority; (grant) \$138,895.

Santa Fe - (member) Southwest Capital Bank; (sponsor) San Ildefonso Housing

Authority; (grant) \$118,305.

Pueblo - (member) Southwest Capital Bank; (sponsor) San Felipe Pueblo Housing Authority; (grant) \$142,800.

TEXAS

Livingston - (member) Austin Bank; (sponsor) Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas Housing Authority; (grant) \$150,000.

Eligible uses for the NAHO Fund grants range from down payment, closing cost and rental assistance to repairs and new construction. The program also provides grants for administrative and operational expenses such as new program development and consultant fees for TDHEs.

\$15,000,000;

Tribal Revenue Fund, \$3,525,000.

For more information, please contact the Choctaw Health Center.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-108, approving Fiscal Year 2025 Budgets for Tribal Administration, Programs, Agencies, & Operations, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves Fiscal Year 2025 Budgets for Tribal Administration, Programs, Agencies, & Operations as set forth below:*

General Revenue Operating Budget, \$116,563,585;

Total Projects & Facilities, \$7,320,694.

The Resolution approves the use of funds from the following sources:

Gaming Revenue, \$55,000,000;

Section 105(L) Lease, \$28,800,000;

General Fund Non-Gaming Revenue, \$5,742,069;

Choctaw Health Center, \$3,525,000;

Choctaw Gaming Commission, \$6,135,007;

Indirect Cost Collections, \$19,652,956;

Program Income, \$5,029,247.

For more information, please contact the Office of Finance and Accounting.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-109, approving a Cost of Living Increase for Tribal Government Employees, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves a cost of living increase for eligible Government employees of the MBCI:*

- A three percent (3%) cost of living increase for employees receiving an annual compensation of \$40,000 & less to be effective October 1, 2024;

- A two percent (2%) cost of living increase for employees receiving an annual compensation of \$40,001-\$82,000 to be effective October 1, 2024;

- A one percent (1%) cost of living increase for employees receiving an annual compensation of \$82,001-\$99,999 to be effective October 1, 2024.

Cost of living increase for eligible Non-Education Pay Scale employees within the Department of Schools to be effective July 1, 2024.

For more information, please contact the Office of Finance & Accounting.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-110, adopting the annual Wildlife Proclamation, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution authorizes the adoption of section § 10-3-1 of the Hunting & Fishing code, the annual Wildlife Proclamation for the 2024-2025 Hunting & Fishing season. For more information, please contact Choctaw Wildlife & Parks.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-111 (B), acquiring ±61 acres in Leake County, Mississippi & to transfer Fee Title to the United States of America in trust for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the acquisition of ±61 acres of privately-owned land in Leake County, Miss., adjoining lands in the Standing Pine community. MBCI Reservation lands are needed to promote Tribal Self-Determination by providing opportunities for future development that will accommodate MBCI's growing population. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Office.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-112 (B), acquiring ±80 acres in Winston County, Mississippi & to transfer Fee Title to the United States of America in trust for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the acquisition of ±80 acres of privately-owned land in Winston County, Miss., adjoining lands in the vicinity of the Nanih Waiya Mound & Nanih Waiya Cave in Winston County, Miss. Additional MBCI Reservation lands are needed in the vicinity of the Nanih Waiya Mound & Nanih Waiya Cave to further protect those sacred sites & conserve the natural resources of the surrounding area. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Office.*

RESOLUTION CHO 24-113, designating a site in the Pearl River Community for a recycling facility, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves*

Hyde-Smith announces \$10.8 million for Miss. Law Enforcement, Public Safety

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Miss.), chair of the Senate Pro-Life Caucus, welcomed the award of more than \$10.8 million through the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to boost law enforcement in communities throughout Mississippi.

Hyde-Smith, member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, worked to advance FY2024 COPS funding that supports the grants awards, which will be used to strengthen public safety through technology & training, improve school security, & support the hiring of entry-level law enforcement officers.

“The safety of our communities requires constant vigilance & the ability to adopt new technologies & equipment to protect the public. These Justice Department COPS grants will help cities, counties, & school districts in our state address some of the law enforcement challenges they face every day,” Hyde-Smith said. “Many of these grant programs are competitive & I commend these Mississippi groups for submitting successful applications.”

The following is a review of the approved FY2024 COPS grants for Mississippi:

2024 COPS Office Technology and Equipment Program (TEP) Awards (\$6,831,000)

Clay County, \$175,000; City of Coldwater, \$52,000; George County, \$1,100,000; Itawamba County, \$119,000; Lee County, \$205,000; Mississippi Department of Public Safety, \$2,021,000; Mississippi Department of Public Safety, \$1,237,000; City of Oxford, \$200,000; Pearl River County, \$1,141,000; City of Tupelo, \$191,000; & Union County, \$390,000.

2024 COPS Office School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP) Awards (\$2,549,932)

Brookhaven School District, \$318,750; Leland School District, \$225,000; Monroe County School District, \$324,376; Neshoba County School District, \$308,309; Nettleton School District, \$375,000; South Pike School District, \$498,750; & Tunica County School District, \$499,747.

2024 COPS Hiring Program (CHP) Awards (\$846,885)

Lamar County, \$500,000 (4 officers); Montgomery County, \$96,885 (1 officer); & Perry County, \$250,000 (2 officers).

2024 COPS Office Coordinated Tribal Assistance Solicitation (CTAS) Awards Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, \$261,836 (equipment & training).

2024 Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness Act (LEMHWA) Program Awards

City of Vicksburg, \$200,000 (Law Enforcement Mental Health & Wellness Act Implementation Projects).

2024 Community Policing Development (CPD) Program Awards

Mississippi Department of Public Safety, \$145,483 (Microgrants/Open Topic Area).

TOTAL: \$10,835,136

In July, Hyde-Smith supported committee passage of the FY2025 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations Bill, in which she worked to continue support for law enforcement and public safety in Mississippi. It is among 11 committee-passed funding bills still awaiting consideration by the full Senate.

RESOLUTIONS continued from page seven

the site for a new recycling center in the Pearl River community supported by grant funds from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For more information, please contact the Office of Environmental Protection.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-114, authorizing disposal of mobile homes administered by the Choctaw Loan Program & to designate sites in the Crystal Ridge Community for development, maintenance, & administration of single-family housing units by Choctaw Housing Authority, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the disposal of mobile homes located in the Crystal Ridge community by donation*

from the Choctaw Loan Program to Choctaw Housing Authority & the Choctaw Housing Authority will cover the cost of demolishing the mobile homes for development, maintenance, & administration of single-family housing units by Choctaw Housing Authority. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-115, authorizing disposal of the remnants of a house, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *MBCI's Real Estate Program has determined that the remnants of the house located at 118 Bell Drive in the Pearl River community are no longer of value to any MBCI Tribal government program since those remnants are*

hazardous to trespassers & have an unsightly appearance that diminishes the value of other houses in the neighborhood. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.

RESOLUTION CHO 24-116, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to apply for a Community Change Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, was ADOPTED - 14 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 3 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the MBCI to apply for a grant with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Justice & External Civil Rights under the auspices of the Environmental & Climate Justice Program, Section 138 of the Clean*

Air Act, 42 U.S.C. §7438. The Community Change Grant program will fund community driven projects to transform all communities into healthy, climate resilient, & thriving communities for current & future residents. For more information, please contact the Office of Environmental Protection.

To request a copy of the Resolution 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 or cheriena.ben@choctaw.org.

Requests for attachments to Tribal Enrollment Resolutions will not be honored due to confidentiality rules.



FVVS commemorates NDRHV

The Family Violence & Victims Services (FVVS) Program commemorated National Day of Remembrance for Homicide Victims (NDRHV) on Wednesday evening, September 25, 2024, at the Pearl River Dance Grounds. Program Manager Danielle Dixon welcomed those in attendance, & staff member Kravon Willis gave an overview of NDRHV. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen & Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben offered brief remarks, & Yolanda Odom from Choctaw Behavioral Health spoke about grief & coping. Pastor Ricky Thompson, Sr., served as guest speaker, followed by singing from the Pearl River Community Baptist Church choir. Candles were lit in memory of lives lost to homicide, & a moment of silence took

place. After a prayer by Pastor Thompson, attendees converged at the Pearl River Community Center to receive an Indian Taco to-go meal to conclude the event. In 2007, Congress designated September 25 as the National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims. Robert & Charlotte Hullinger, of Cincinnati, formed Parents of Murdered Children following the 1978 murder of their 19-year-old daughter, Lisa, while she was studying in Germany. The annual day of observance is on the date Lisa was murdered. The annual National Day of Remembrance for Murder Victims serves as an opportunity to remember those lost to homicide, honor their memories, focus on the impact of murder on families & communities, & ways to support & serve survivors.

IMPACT continued from page one

generating \$227.2 million in personal income across that state. The MBCI economic activities spark spending that supports the employment of 6,696 people. In addition, the Tribe's construction projects create another 3,079 nonrecurring positions, generate \$209.3 million in personal income, & add \$486.9 million to the state output over the lives of the construction projects.

MBCI's recurring tribal government expenditures totaled \$225.7 million, which were used to pay employees, purchase goods & services, & carry out daily operations. MBCI's tribal government operations increased production in Mississippi by \$365.8 million, income by \$61.3 million, & supported 1,271 jobs.

creation of three additional jobs in Mississippi.

PEARL RIVER RESORT

The Pearl River Resort is a popular destination for visitors. World-class casinos, two award-winning golf courses & the Southeast's top water park attract visitors from across Mississippi & neighboring states, & their spending injects new money into the state's economy.

In 2022, MBCI had 20 projects under construction or planning phases, representing an investment of \$310.6 million. These construction projects will increase the output in Mississippi by \$486.9 million & personal income by \$209.3 million. The MBCI construction will support 3,079 jobs over the life of these construction projects.

In 2022, out-of-state visitors' spending on Mississippi businesses off tribal lands (catalytic expenditure) increased Mississippi's output by \$123.8 million. These impacts can also be described by the \$31.8 million increase in income & the 1,055 jobs supported.

The MBCI is the only federally recognized Native American tribe in the State of Mississippi. It is a sovereign nation with more than 11,000 Tribal members & over 35,000 acres of Tribal land across Mississippi & Tennessee. Learn more at mschoctawbusiness.com.

TRIBAL BUSINESSES

MBCI operates a wide array of businesses, providing goods & services across multiple sectors, such as casinos & hotels, recreation, food & dining, retail services, & more. During 2022, MBCI's enterprises' revenue was \$323.5 million. MBCI's business operations increased the output in the state by \$489.8 million, increased income by \$134 million, & supported 4,367 jobs. During the study period,

TRIBAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The Tribal Scholarship Program was established to offer eligible members financial support to pursue education beyond high school. In 2022, 41 TSP graduates collectively earned \$795,288 more than they would have without their degrees. Their higher incomes spark additional expenditures in the state economy. TPS graduates increased the income for others by \$141,052, increased output by \$535,611 & supported the

"The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has done a great job helping to build our record-breaking economy in Mississippi! Thanks for your outstanding work and commitment to our great state!" - (Gov. Tate Reeves' Facebook post, Sept. 20)

John, Public Works honored by Voc Rehab Services

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program hosted its 2024 Disability Awareness event honoring an Employee and Employer of the Year on Tuesday, September 24th, at the Golden Moon Hotel & Casino VIP Room in Choctaw.

This year's honorees were Jacklin G. John, Employee of the Year, and MBCI Public Works as Employer of the Year.

"This is one of the most exciting events the Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program sponsors each year because it recognizes successful business practices and personal accomplishments," said emcee Katelyn Shoemake, Personal & Vocational Adjustment Trainer.

"Each year, the program organizes events like this with the intent of increasing awareness of disability issues and celebrating successes. We are here to celebrate successes today

recognizing a particular employer who made a significant impact on the employment of qualified individuals who experience physical or mental conditions that impact their employment, and an individual who has significant personal success in their personal life and employment goals."

October will be recognized as National Disability Employment Awareness Month and the theme is, *Access to Good Jobs for All*. The U.S. Department of Labor, when announcing the chosen theme, stated, "During National Disability Employment Awareness Month, we celebrate the value and talent workers with disabilities add to America's workplaces and economy."

"That's the spirit behind this year's official theme, and one that is practiced daily in our program," said Shoemake. "Let us all be reminded of our national, state and tribe's on-



Pictured, from left to right, are Department of Workforce Development Director Terry Ben, (Employer of the Year) MBCI Public Works representatives Becky Hall, director Reggie Shumaker, Melina Ferris, (Employee of the Year) Jacklin G. John, & Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben.

going quest to provide access to good jobs for all, including those among us who personally experience a physical or mental impairment that may affect their employment life."

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben offered his appreciation to the Vocational Rehabilitation Services staff for opening the door of opportunities for Tribal members.

"We are very thankful for this program that provides opportunities and services for Tribal

members. It also provides an opportunity for employers because they don't know what employee might walk in and soon develop into a lifelong career. I'm glad to be here and celebrate with the employee and employer."

Chief Ben and Terry Ben, Department of Workforce Development Director, presented the honorees with their awards.

On behalf of MBCI Public **continued next page**



Tribal Child Support, TANF Services opens

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held for Tribal Child Support Services & Tribal TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Services on Monday, September 9, 2024, at 300 Choctaw Town Center (2nd floor, Suite 203) in Choctaw. The purpose of the Tribal TANF program is to provide welfare assistance & supportative services to eligible Native American families with children in need of temporary assistance. The program is supported by 1 Family Services in Indian Country, LLC (IFSIC) as their vision is to ensure every child receives the full benefits of tribal programs as mandated by Congress & to ensure the program remains cost-effective for tribal governments. Established in 2009 by Kay Kile & Jerry Sweet, IFSIC assists tribes in developing & operating various social services programs, including, but not limited to: tribal child support & TANF; repre-

sentative payee; tribal enrollment; & child welfare. IFSIC created a tribal disbursement center to assist tribes in disbursing child support & TANF payments to tribal families. In attendance for the ceremony were Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Tribal Council Representatives Kendall Wallace & Angela Hundley (Bogue Chitto), Loriann Ahshapanek & Richard Sockey (Standing Pine), Timothy Thomas, Sr., Hilda Nickey, & Gregory Shoemake (Conehatta), Ricky Anderson, Sr., & Sam John (Red Water), Dorothy Wilson (Tucker), Kent Wesley (Pearl River), & 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen. Also in attendance were Jerry Sweet, Sr., President & CEO of IFSIC, Denise Wesley of Mississippi Child Support Services, Charity Casey of Region 4 Office of Child Support Services, & LaMonica Shelton, Tribal TANF Region 4.

Works, director Reggie Shumaker praised Jacklin on her work ethic and called her a “winner.”

“When Jacklin was sent over with her test, I knew we had a winner immediately. She stays busy all day and I don’t have to worry about her. We appreciate her, we appreciate this award, we appreciate the program, several good employees come over and help us out, and we’re always looking for more,” said Shumaker.

Pastor Thomas Ben, Day Training Director, offered the blessing of the meal as attendees enjoyed a delicious Indian Taco lunch.

Prior to the ceremony, a Disability Awareness Bingo was held. Those in attendance received an official Disability Awareness t-shirt. The event was made possible by a grant from the Choctaw Community Fund.

Fall Respiratory Virus Policy Update

By the Choctaw Public Health Services

COVID-19, flu, & RSV are very common respiratory viruses that cause significant amounts of disease, especially in the fall & winter seasons. Although we have tools & protection to fight serious respiratory illness, we want to remain mindful of protecting those around us, especially those at higher risk.

Persons who test positive for respiratory viruses (Flu, COVID, RSV) should stay home & away from others for 5 days from the start of their symptoms. We encourage patients to remain mindful of their risk of infecting others in the days following their illness & encourage, but not mandate, the added precautions of wearing a mask for 5 additional days when returning to work.

Individuals who were exposed to respiratory viruses will not be required to stay away from others or take specific added

see **VIRUSES**, pg. 12

FALL SEASON RESPIRATORY VACCINE RECOMMENDATIONS

USET TEC recommends seasonal vaccines early in the fall season as an effective prevention measure. These include vaccines for COVID-19, Flu and RSV.

Who's eligible for the new COVID-19 vaccine?

- Children 6 months to 4 years old
- Number of doses is dependent on vaccination history
- Everyone 5 years and older is eligible for one (1) updated Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of previous vaccination history

Who's eligible for the seasonal influenza (flu) vaccine?

- With rare exception, everyone 6 months and older are recommended for annual flu vaccination
- High-dose vaccines are available for persons 65 years and older

Who's eligible for the RSV vaccine?

- All persons 60 years and older
- Pregnant women 32-36 weeks gestation
- Children from birth to 19 months of age

Vaccines don't save lives. Vaccinations save lives.

For more information, contact Choctaw Health Center at 601.389.4500



Glow Run/Walk for Suicide Prevention

A 2 mile Glow Run/Walk for Suicide Prevention Awareness, hosted by Choctaw Behavioral Health & the Choctaw Youth Resilience Initiative, was held on Friday evening, Sept. 13, in Choctaw. Hundreds of participants, wearing or carrying glow in the dark accessories, made their way from the Geyser Falls Water Park parking lot to the Choctaw Sportsplex & back. September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month – a time to remember lives lost to suicide, acknowledge millions more who have experienced suicidal thoughts, & many individuals, families & communities that have been impacted by suicide. It's a time to raise awareness about suicide prevention & share messages of hope.

The Truth About Opioid Overdose

What are the signs of an opioid overdose?

- Small, constricted “pinpoint pupils”
- Falling asleep or loss of consciousness
- Slow, shallow breathing
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Discolored skin (especially in lips and nails)

If you aren't sure, if a person is high or experiencing an overdose it's best to treat it like an overdose—you could save a life.

What to Do in an Overdose Situation:
Call 911.
Administer Naloxone (Narcan) if available.
Perform Rescue Breathing or CPR if trained.
Stay with the person until help arrives.

For more information on Naloxone Prevention Kits contact Choctaw Behavioral Health at 601-389-4150.

If you or your loved one has shown signs please call Choctaw Behavioral Health at 601-389-4150 to seek help.

VIRUSES continued from page eleven

precautions. It is recommended that exposed individuals continue normal activities, including work, unless symptoms develop. We encourage these individuals to remain mindful of their potential risk to others & encourage but not mandate the added precautions of wearing a mask when continuing normal activities or returning to work.

If you have questions or need

COVID at-home test kits, call Public Health Services at 601-389-4110, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.– 4:30 p.m.

If you need to speak to another licensed healthcare professional, call the CHC Telephone Clinic at 601-389-4468 (after hours, 601-389-4500), Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

ELECTRIC BUSES continued from page one

It can charge in two to three hours on a DC fast charger and has a range of up to 135 miles.

The buses were unveiled to members of the Tribal leadership, including Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben and members of the Choctaw Tribal Council, Tribal Administration, and officials with the Department of Schools and Tribal Schools Transportation. After the presentation, officials got a first hand experi-

ence riding the bus.

In addition to offering zero-emission travel, electric school buses are more comfortable to drive and can save on costly gas and maintenance. Perhaps most importantly, the students love them so far for their quiet and comfortable ride.

A bus driver for the Tribal Schools said the e-bus was his favorite to drive while a Department of Schools official remarked how the kids love and appreciate the bus because it is now quiet and has an air conditioner on board.

In October of 2022, the Biden-Harris Administration announced the Fiscal Year 2022 recipients of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Clean School Bus Program rebate competition, awarding over \$36 million from President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to 9 school districts in Mississippi. Choctaw Tribal Schools was one of the recipients as

continued next page

FLU VACCINE AVAILABILITY AT CHOCTAW HEALTH CENTER

✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE IT?
With rare exception, everyone 6 months and older are recommended for annual flu vaccination. High-dose vaccines are available for persons 65 years and older.

WHERE CAN I GO TO GET IT?
Primary Care Pediatric Clinic
Primary Care Clinic
Satellite Clinics: Bogue Chitto Clinic, Red Water Clinic, and Conehatta Clinic.

Can I take it at the same time as other vaccines?
Yes, the flu vaccine can be given at the same time as other vaccines, including the new COVID-19 and RSV vaccines.

For more information, contact Choctaw Health Center at 601.389.4500

COVID-19 VACCINE AVAILABILITY AT CHOCTAW HEALTH CENTER

✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE IT?
Children 6 months to 4 years old: number of doses is dependent on vaccination history.
Everyone 5 years and older: eligible for one (1) updated COVID-19 vaccine, regardless of previous vaccination history.

WHERE CAN I GO TO GET IT?
Primary Care Clinic
Primary Care Pediatric Clinic

Can I take it at the same time as other vaccines?
Yes, the COVID-19 vaccine can be given at the same time as other vaccines, including the flu and RSV vaccines.

For more information, contact Choctaw Health Center at 601.389.4500



See You at the Pole

Members of the Choctaw Central High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes (CCHS FCA), along with fellow students, faculty, & officials, gathered on Wednesday, Sept. 25, near the flagpole at the entrance of Warrior Stadium to participate in the See You at the Pole event. The event is for students to congregate before the beginning of the school day around the flagpole to pray for the school, students and greater community, as well as provide an opportunity for fellowship with each other. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & CCHS Principal Alaric Keams gave remarks as members of The Spirit of Life Christian Center provided breakfast biscuits, water & bracelets to attendees.



they were awarded over \$3.6 million to purchase the buses.

The grants helped school districts purchase over 96 electric school buses that will accelerate the transition to zero emissions vehicles and produce cleaner air in and around schools and communities.

TBB and Proterra offered school bus operators a comprehensive, turn-key electric vehicle program that includes EV planning and funding consultation, electric school buses, charging systems, and charging infrastructure design and installation.

In May 2022, EPA announced the availability of \$500 million for its Clean School Bus Program. Given overwhelming demand from school districts across the country, including in low-income communities, Tribal nations, and territories, EPA nearly doubled the amount of funding that was awarded to \$965 million.

The agency selected 389 applications totaling \$913 million to support the purchase of 2,463 buses, 95 percent of which will be electric. EPA distributed awards to school

districts in all 50 states, Washington D.C., along with several federally recognized Tribes and U.S. territories.

School districts identified as priority areas serving low-income, rural, and, or Tribal students made up 99 percent of the projects that were selected.

EPA also partnered with the U.S. Department of Energy and Department of Transportation to provide school districts with robust technical assistance to ensure effective implementation. These awards were the first \$1 billion of a five-year, \$5 billion program created by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

"Thank you to the EPA for its commitment to ensuring Native communities like MBCI are included in green initiatives," said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. "These buses are energy-efficient and cost-effective, and we are pleased to be able to provide our students with comfortable transportation."

Department of Schools Director Delnita Jones also offered her appreciation and thanked those who were involved.

"Thank you to the administration for supporting this grant," said Jones. "When our students

see the new buses, they see we care about them, and they care about the product."



Tribal Chief Ben, right, discusses the elements of the charging stations with school transportation officials. Four stations were installed across from the MBCI Attorney General's Office in Pearl River. A station is installed on each of the Tribal School campuses in the outlying communities.



Students of the Month honored

The Rotary Club of Philadelphia recently recognized three local high school students as the September 2024 Students of the Month. From left are, Mark Taylor, student of the month chairman; Leigh Allyn Stroud, Neshoba Central; Dakota Hudson, Philadelphia; Raiyleigh Perry, Choctaw Central; & Tim Moore, Rotary Club president. A special thank you to the parents, school counselors, principals & superintendents who came to support these students.

Litefoot visits CCHS

On Friday, Sept. 20, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians welcomed actor, musician, filmmaker, and author Gary "Litefoot" Davis to Choctaw Tribal lands & to the Choctaw Central campus. Litefoot is currently on a nationwide speaking and film tour to Tribal communities in 2024 called the "Strong Hearts Tour." This tour is intended to bring communities together through Litefoot's motivational messages coupled with the powerful medium of visual storytelling, using Litefoot's award-winning short film "Strong Hearts: An Indigenous Love Letter to My Sons" as its centerpiece.

2024 AMERICAN INDIAN DAY PRINCESS & BRAVE PAGEANT WINNERS



DOECE Princess, Brave

The Department of Early Childhood Education (DOECE) held their 2024 American Indian Day Princess & Brave Pageant on Tuesday, Oct. 1, at the Golden Moon VIP Room in Choctaw. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen was in attendance to crown the 2024-2025 Princess Genazmai Jerrilynn Dixon & Brave Kai Anderson. Congratulations!



CES Princesses, Braves

Conehatta Elementary School held their American Indian Day Princess and Brave Pageant on Tuesday, Sept. 24. Congratulations to the following: Tiny Princess Paisley Jefferson & 1st Alternate Aziya Denson; Tiny Brave Jaxon Jim & 1st Alternate J'Rayus Welsey; Lil Princess Peyton Wesley & 1st Alternate Jaycee Shoemake; Lil Brave Langston Logan & 1st Alternate De'Andre Shoemake; Jr. Princess Arabella Thomas & 1st Alternate Jacy Tubby; Jr. Brave Connor Anderson & 1st Alternate Daysen Shoemake.



BCES Princesses, Braves

Bogue Chitto Elementary School hosted their 2024 American Indian Day Princess & Brave Pageant on Monday, Sept. 23. The following division winners include: (Group 1) Princess Tayber Thomas & Brave Jonas Williams; (Group 2) Princess Lenayah Thomas & Brave Zeitler Frazier; (Group 3) Princess Taelor Crosby & Brave Xavery Gomez; (Group 4) Princess Isis Willis & Brave Adrian Vargas.



PRES Princesses, Braves

The 2024 Pearl River Elementary School American Indian Day Princess and Brave Pageant was held on Thursday, September 26. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen served as mistress of ceremonies. Congratulations to the following: (Division 1) Princess Jaybee Bell & Brave Owen Morris; (Division 2) Princess Jaysa Gibson & Brave Imayya Alex; (Division 3) Princess Ashlynn McMillan & Brave Lane Willis; (Division 4) Princess Jaciryn Vaughn & Brave Hunter John.



CCMS, CCHS Princesses, Braves

On Thursday, Sept. 26, American Indian Day Princess & Brave Pageants were held at Choctaw Central Middle School & Choctaw Central High School. Winners included, from left, CCMS Brave Treyton Kinsolving, CCMS Princess Daislin Isaac, CCHS Princess Teresa Willis, & CCHS Brave Brady Farve.



RWES Princesses, Braves

Red Water Elementary School held their American Indian Day Princess and Brave Pageant on Thursday, Sept. 26. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen served as mistress of ceremonies. Congratulations to the following: (Category 1) Princess Caletis Smith & 1st Alternate Evelyn Flint; Brave Amaziah Edwards & 1st Alternate Darius Dixon; (Category 2) Princess Landry Wilson & 1st Alternate Ellynn Grisham; Brave Atticus Jim & 1st Alternate Genesis Shumake; (Category 3) Princess Alysia Willis & 1st Alternate Shaylee Alex.



TES Princesses, Braves

Tucker Elementary School hosted their 2024 American Indian Day Princess & Brave Pageant on Tuesday, Sept. 24. Congratulations to the following: (Division I) Princess Ava Gibson, 1st Alternate Grayse'Lynn McMillan, & 2nd Alternate Vyla Willis; Brave Kayden Billy; (Division II) Princess Faithlyn Mingo, 1st Alternate Keilani Gibson, & 2nd Alternate Kelise Perry; Brave Koide Isaac, 1st Alternate Grayson Billy, & 2nd Alternate Dominic Willis; (Division III) Princess A'Ria McMillan, 1st Alternate Mylah Gibson, & 2nd Alternate Merlainey York; Brave Braydon Farmer & 1st Alternate Jacaius Willis.



SPES Princesses, Braves

Standing Pine Elementary School held their American Indian Day Princess and Brave Pageant on Wednesday, Sept. 25. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen served as mistress of ceremonies. Congratulations to the following: Tiny Princess Mesmeray Polk & Tiny Brave Tyrus Denson; Lil Princess Camilla Pinto & Lil Brave Dominic Tubby; & Princess Natayah Willis & Brave Grayson Tangle.



CEAC Princess, Brave

The Choctaw Elderly Activity Center held their American Indian Day Princess and Brave Pageant on Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024. Pictured, from left to right, are Brave 1st Alternate Jerry Kinsolving, Brave Larry Bell, Princess Helen Moore, & Princess 1st Alternate Peggy Williams.

B&G Club Princesses, Braves

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the MBCI hosted their 2024 Princess & Brave Pageant on Thursday evening, Sept. 19, at the Pearl River Teen Center. Congratulations to this year's winners: Lil Princess Sayimmi Isaac, Lil Brave Daylen Rodriquez, Junior Princess Kaliana Lewis, Junior Brave Keyston Willis, Princess Laylee Wishork, & Brave Zathain Ben. Also included in the picture are Executive Director Glen Billie and 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen as she served as mistress of ceremonies.



ASU Extension Program, MAC host Small Farmers Conference

The 33rd Annual Small Farmers Conference, organized by the Alcorn State University Extension Program in partnership with the Mississippi Association of Cooperatives (MAC), took place Sept. 23-25, at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw, Miss.

The conference provides an opportunity for Alcorn & the MAC staff to engage with new & beginning farmers, as well as reconnect with existing farmer clientele.

“The goal of the conference is to provide educational sessions designed to assist producers, farmers, & landowners in making sound decisions regarding their farm enterprise,” said Gerald Jones, Extension Programs director for county operations.

The conference included hands-on outdoor agriculture learning sites, covering livestock, vegetable production, drone technology, farm recordkeeping, integrated pest management, & value-added vegetable processing. The “Women in Business” session spotlighted various entrepreneurs



The On To The Next Challenge Dance Group performed several traditional Choctaw dances during the opening of the 33rd Annual Small Farmers Conference. Several attendees had the opportunity to perform the Stealing Partners Dance with the group. Pastor Thomas Ben offered the invocation & 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen welcomed attendees on behalf of the Tribe.

from across the state.

The event was open to farmers, producers, landowners, & women in business from across the state & neighboring regions, including Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, & Tennessee.

This year’s conference in East-Central Mississippi received support from the Neshoba County Board of Supervisors, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, local farm cooperatives, & the Associate Extension Administrator.

Day for Kids

On Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, the Boys & Girls Clubs of the MBCI held its annual Day for Kids at the CCHS Baseball Field in the Pearl River community. Families participated in fun activities such as corn hole, face painting, cake walk, volleyball, inflatable bounce houses, & 16" softball games. A grab-and-go lunch was prepared. The event also highlighted several Tribal programs providing information of services they provide to the 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 positively of themselves. Oftentimes, that positive thinking leads to making better decisions as they grow.



Sockey participates in Youth Tour of D.C.

Katie Sockey, a senior at Leake Academy in Madden, Miss., recently traveled to Washington, D.C., as part of the Cooperative Youth Leaders program's week-long trip to experience the facets of the

ation's capital. Sockey was among 85 high school seniors from across Mississippi, along with nearly 1,700 student leaders from 44 states, to participate in the 2024 National Rural Electric Coop-

erative Association's Youth Tour in June.

The trip was the culmination of the students' participation in their state's respective leadership program, which instills leadership skills, inspires creative thinking, builds confidence in decision-making, and introduces students to lawmakers that represent their communities.

Sockey, along with fellow Central Electric student representatives Mitch Pucklitsch of Leake Academy & Abreale Leflore of Leake Central High School, visited historic sites & learned about the impact electric cooperatives have on their communities.

Students toured the U.S. Capitol, sat on the floor of the House of Representatives, & visited the Library of Congress as guests of former U.S. Congressman Gregg Harper of Mississippi.

"Our tour of the Capitol with former Congressman Gregg Harper made me more moti-

vated to pursue my dreams. My Youth Tour experience was transformative and inspiring," said Sockey.

The Cooperative Youth Leaders program is funded - including the trip to D.C. - by local electric co-ops as a commitment to molding future leaders for Mississippi, so they can impact the state and local communities.

Katie is the daughter of Richard & Marion Sockey of the Standing Pine Community.



Pictured, from left to right, are Central Electric student representatives Katie Sockey & Mitch Pucklitsch (Leake Academy), & Abreale Leflore (Leake Central High School). -Photo from Today in Mississippi



Choctaw Adult Education Open House

The Choctaw Adult Education Program hosted an Open House on Thursday, September 26, 2024, at the Manpower Building in the Pearl River community. This event was held to help kick off a new learning year, & gave program participants an opportunity to meet program officials & instructors & explore classrooms. Afterwards, refreshments were served.



Lady Rockets receive Class 6A championship rings

The 2023-2024 Neshoba Central Lady Rockets basketball team was honored during a championship ring ceremony prior to the Neshoba-West Point football game on Friday evening, Sept. 20. The Lady Rockets claimed the 2024



MHSAA Class 6A state basketball championship with a 53-39 over Terry last March in Jackson. It was their 2nd state championship in three years as they concluded the season with a 32-1 overall record & a #1 ranking in Mississippi.

Senior Nights 2024

CCHS hosts Senior Night

Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) hosted Senior Night activities for members of the cross country, golf, and volleyball teams on Tuesday evening, Sept. 17. Seniors honored were Karli Bell, Chance Briscoe, Aubree Cotton, Danica Ferris, Aiyana Frazier, Natalia Jones, Ajay Lewis, Raiyleigh Perry, Avander Shumake, Alexavier Thompson, Diontray Tubby, & Traeh Vaughn. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben and 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen were on hand, along with coaches, Fellowship of Christian Athletes student representatives, family members, friends, and supporters, to help honor these students & offer them best wishes on their future endeavours.



NCHS hosts Senior Night

Neshoba Central High School (NCHS) hosted Senior Night activities for members of the NJROTC & cross country team on Friday evening, Sept. 6. Among the Rocket & Lady Rocket seniors honored were Tribal youth Parish Comby, Tara Cotton, Cecil Dixon, Leticia Lopez, Cianna Phillips, Isaiah Thomas, & Jordan Langley. Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen joined family members



to congratulate the seniors & presented gifts to them on behalf of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. Congratulations & best wishes on their senior years!



NCHS Band Senior honored

Neshoba Central High School held Senior Night activities for band on Friday evening, Sept. 20. Amongst the seniors honored was Tribal youth Netiyah Thompson. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen joined family members & supporters to congratulate Netiyah. Chief Ben presented a gift to her. Congratulations & best wishes on much success the rest of your senior year!



Lake Volleyball Senior honored

Lake High School held Senior Night activities for volleyball on Monday evening, Sept. 23. Tribal youth Alyssa Sockey was one of the team seniors honored as Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen joined family members & supporters to celebrate with Alyssa & presented her a gift. Congratulations & we wish you more success this senior year!

Church members participate in walk for unity, forgiveness

Parishoners and guests of Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church gathered on Saturday morning, September 21st, 2024, to participate in a remembrance walk commemorating the bombings of the church in the 1960's and their subsequent efforts to rebuild and reflect on God's grace, healing and forgiveness.

The walk started at the Nanih Waiya Ceremonial Mound and concluded at the church. Also in attendance for the walk included a delegation representing the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) as they took the opportunity to visit the church as part of their civil rights tour.

Pastor Mark Roth spoke of the church's establishment, bombings that were inflicted during the height of racial tensions in 1964, and the aftermath of forgiving those who were involved as the congregation united in faith and strength.

Founded by Nevin and Esther Bender, Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church was established as a result of bible study classes being held in Noxapater, Miss., for Tribal members. Through prayers and sermons, a decision was made to construct a church for the Choctaw people to have a safe place to worship.

Land was secured and a basic building was erected, with the first services being held on February 10, 1963. Nearly a year and a half later, on September 19, 1964, the church was bombed for the first time.

"At that time, the law was not very supportive nor helpful. They thought the church would fold and go away. That's not what happened as members of the church and Choctaw fami-

lies in the community came together to clean up and rebuild. In a matter of weeks, the church was rebuilt. As a result, attendance grew," said Roth.

On February 19, 1966, the church was bombed again. Although not completely destroyed, church and community members came together to rebuild, this time adding an annex section to the church.

"More people came to the church out of interest and support for what was taking place," said Roth.

The third bombing took place on December 23, 1966. Members of a Tribal youth group and their chaperones had returned to the church after a night of Christmas caroling to find the destruction.

"After three bombings, I don't know how I would have been. I might have been thinking, 'OK, this is pretty bad. Maybe we should be doing something else.' But the Nanih Waiya congregation sensed God's lead to not give up, to rise above the challenges they faced, especially in a time when racial tensions were extremely high. There was so much uneasiness present."

The congregation, along with the Choctaw community, were led by the spirit of God as they persevered. They were resilient, courageous, and able to forgive those who tried to impose harm upon them.

Roth cited Genesis 50:20, "You plan something

bad for me, but God produced something good from it, in order to save the lives of many people, just as he's doing today."

"People who bombed the church wanted to harm and cease what was taking place in this place of worship and teaching the ways of Jesus. The intentions were evil. The church didn't give up or give in, but grew in strength and in unity," Roth said.

Citing the words of the late Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Hate begets hate, violence begets violence, toughness begets a greater toughness. We must meet the forces of hate with the power of love."

"That's exactly what the Choctaw people did. This is the purpose of the remembrance walk, to reflect on God's grace, healing and forgiveness," Roth said.

After the walk, participants were treated to breakfast prepared by the Nanih Waiya congregation. A program was held inside the church as members of the MCC delegation learned more about the church's his-

tory. Several parishoners recounted personal experiences of Freedom Summer 1964 and the racial tensions that engulfed the area.

Nanih Waiya church members then sang several hymns in the Choctaw language and presented traditional Choctaw crafts and beaded jewelry and items to the MCC delegation.

The idea of a remembrance walk originated with the late Bobbie Frazier, congregation member, the late Rev. Glenn Myers and the late Rev. Ethan Goode to offer forgiveness and celebrate the strength of unity and faith among the church and community members.

"After three attempts to destroy the fellowship of Nanih Waiya, three times the church was bombed, and each time believers rallied to rebuild and repair the building," added Roth.

The walk also remembered the sacrifices the majority of Choctaw ancestors who were removed from Mississippi and forced to endure the long walk on the Trail of Tears to the Indian territory of Oklahoma in the 1830's.



The Nanih Waiya Mennonite congregation & a delegation of the Mennonite Central Committee started the remembrance walk at the Nanih Waiya Ceremonial Mound site & concluded at the Nanih Waiya Indian Mennonite Church.



Several members of the Nanih Waiya Mennonite congregation & a delegation of the Mennonite Central Committee pose in front of the church.



HERMAN YOUNG, SR.

Funeral services for Herman Young, Sr., 78, was held on Monday, August 26, 2024, at John E. Stephens Chapel in Philadelphia. Rev. Barry Fulton officiated.

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

Mr. Young passed away on August 19 at Anderson Hospital in Meridian.

He lived most of his life in Chicago, IL & was Pentecostal by Faith. He enjoyed fishing & listening to the Blues.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Jerry B. & Reoda Wiseman Young; son, Larry Mingo; & numerous siblings.

Survivors include his daughters, Nicolette Mingo, Brandi Mingo, Michelle Banks, & Lisa Logan; sons, Herman Young, Jr. & Otis Mingo; 29 grandchildren; 16 great-grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

BRANDI LEE WALLACE

Funeral services for Brandi Lee Wallace, 41, was held on Thursday, September 5, 2024, at the Bogue Chitto CERF Building. Bro. Joseph Wesley & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.



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

Ms. Wallace passed away on Sept. 1 at her residence.

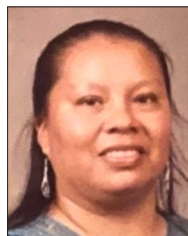
She enjoyed traveling, shopping with her daughter & brothers, listening to music, & being with her families & friends. Known by "Kit Ta" & "T-Bear," she was a proud 2002 graduate of Choctaw Central High School. She went into the workforce as a Tribal Court Clerk, then a records clerk for Chotaw Central High School. She was a co-founder of the Nanih Waiya Social Dance Group & enjoyed watching them perform at this year's Choctaw Indian Fair. She also loved being at Zarn's shop, "The Hang Out."

She is preceded in death by her parents, Victor Morris, Sr. & Brenda Lee Wallace; & a sister, Brianna Wallace.

Survivors include her daughter, Brayleigh Wallace; brothers, Vikbrendan Morris, Victor Morris, Jr. & Anzlem Parkerson; & a host of relatives & friends.

SUSIE COMBY ALEX

Funeral services for Susie Comby Alex, 76, was held on Saturday, September 7, 2024, at the Pearl River CERF Building. Rev. Travis Willis & Bro. Mark Roth officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.



Ms. Alex passed away on Sept. 3 at River Oaks Hospital in Flowood.

She was valedictorian & class president of Choctaw Central's graduating class of 1966. She attended East Central Community College for two years, the University of Southern Mississippi for two years, & the University of Arizona for a year. She came back home to work as a Media Specialist/Librarian at Choctaw Central. She retired in May 2022, working for over 50 years in the BIA/Choctaw Tribal School System.

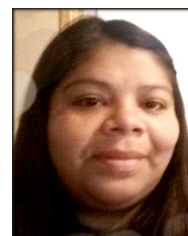
She enjoyed doing sudoku puzzles, watching the Game-Show Channel, & talking with others. She treasured time with her family & watching Beaver Dam stickball games because she was a big fan. During the fair, she made her way to the arts & crafts vendors so she could get earrings for her collection.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Jones & Rosia Isaac Comby; husband, Herbert Alex; & brothers, Willie Theo Comby, Dean Bowen Comby, & Harold "Doc" Comby.

Survivors include her daughters, Nancy (Charles) Tubby & Allie (Curtis) Chapman; son, Tim (Marion) Comby; sisters, Mary Helen Umholtz, Delores Hodridge, & Annette Kizer; brothers, Jimmy Isaac, Sr., David Dale Comby, & Leonard Jones Comby; 11 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

JULIE ANN DENSON

Funeral services for Julie Ann Denson, 43, was held on Thursday, September 12, 2024, at the Standing Pine Community Gymnasium. Deacon Shaunde Ahshapanek & Bro. Mark Patrick officiated.



Burial was in the Standing

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

Ms. Denson passed away on Sept. 7 at Anderson Baptist Hospital in Meridian.

She enjoyed spending time with her family, playing volleyball, stickball, & basketball. She was a member of Hopewell Baptist Church.

She is preceded in death by her father, Ricky Lee Denson, Sr.; grandparents, Easlin Denson & Lucille Chickaway, Homer & Fannie Lou Willis Sockey.

Survivors include her companion, Merrill Vaughn; mother, Mary Helen Sockey Denson; daughters, Michelle Denson, Sadie Ann Vaughn, Taylor Vaughn, & Haylee Denson; sons, Josiah Lee Tubby, Damien Vaughn, & Julian Vaughn; sisters, Marie Denson, Lucinda Vargas, Beaudie Denson, & Lynn Parkerson; brothers, David Denson, Emery Denson, & Ricky Lee Denson, Jr.; 6 grandchildren; & host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

ANGELA WILLIS STEPHENS

Funeral services for Angela Willis Stephens, 63, was held on Sunday, September 15, 2024, at the Bogue Chitto Community Gymnasium. Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.



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

Ms. Stephens passed away on Sept. 10 at St. Dominic's Hospital in Jackson.

She enjoyed going to church,

see OBITUARIES, pg. 28

OBITUARIES continued from page twenty-one

yard sales, talking on the phone, going to the casino, being with family, friends, & her cat Tweenie.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Grady & Pearl Hickman Willis; sister, Charlene Billie; brothers, Roy Gene Willis & Roy Reed Willis; niece, Kimberly Willis; & a nephew, Adraine Tubby.

Survivors include a daughter, Cassandra Stephens; sons, Dwight Willis & Benjamin Stephens; brother, Junie Willis; 4 grandchildren; 6 great-grandchildren; 4 nieces; & a host of relatives & friends.

DAVID WAYNE SMITH, JR.

Funeral services for David Wayne Smith, Jr., 41, was held on Friday, September 20, 2024, at the Conehatta CERF Building. Rev. Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated.



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

Mr. Smith passed away on Sept. 16 at Baptist Anderson Regional Medical Center in Meridian.

A resident of the Conehatta community, he was a (2001?) graduate of Choctaw Central & attended East Central Community College to study auto mechanics. He joined the workforce as a restaurant host, table games dealer, store clerk, & being a driver for his aunt. He enjoyed family gatherings, fishing, playing golf & stickball, watching MSU Bulldogs & San Francisco 49ers football, being with family & friends, & talking on the phone.

He is preceded in death by

his parents, David Smith, Sr. & Sally Rose (Jim) Williams; stepfather, John Henry Williams; sisters, Mindy LaChelle Smith Bell & Cordelia Johnette Williams; grandparents, Dalton & Edna Smith, Viola Jim; & a niece, I'Sallyn Bell.

Survivors include a sister, Leanna Charlie; stepbrother, Garrett Williams; aunts, Clara Tubby & Debra Smith; uncles, Milton Smith & Gerald Smith; niece, Cornelia Bell; nephews, Tayden Hickman & I'zden Charlie; & a host relatives & friends.

ANGELA DENISE HICKMAN JOHN

Funeral services for Angela Denise Hickman John, 58, was held on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at Pearl River Baptist Church. Rev. Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated.



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

Ms. John passed away on Sept. 20 at her residence.

She was born on April 10, 1966, to Ivora Willis Hickman & Willie J. Hickman in St. Louis, MO. She resided in the Pearl River community most of her life & was employed with MBCI Tribal Security & Universal Security. She enjoyed taking mini-vacations & going to work.

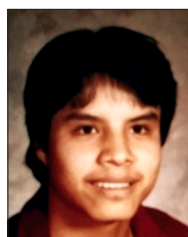
She is preceded in death by her loving husband, Mark John; beloved son, Joshua Hickman; infant girl Hickman; parents, Ivora Willis Hickman & Willie J. Hickman; sisters, Sylvia Wimberly & Deborah Bell; brothers, Thaddeus Hick-

man, Jeffery Hickman, Leonard Hickman, Darryl Hickman, Flavion Hickman, Jerry Hickman, & Anthen Johnson, Jr.

Survivors include her sister, Donna Williams; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

CHRISTOPHER LEE TUBBY

Funeral services for Christopher Lee Tubby, 57, was held on Friday, September 27, 2024, at Hope Indian Baptist Church in Pearl River. Bro. Marco Patrick & Rev. Mark Patrick officiated.



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

Mr. Tubby passed away on Sept. 21 at his residence.

He was Baptist by Faith & enjoyed being with his family, fixing vehicles, going on drives, listening to music, & going to the casino.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Malcolm Isaac & Ezaline Tubby Polk; extended father, Leonard Willis; sisters, Malesia Polk, Allison Isaac, & Sharon Isaac; a niece, Raekayla Wallace; & a nephew, Tanner Henry.

Survivors include his mother, Clettie Willis; sons, Craig Martin & Duane Martin; extended sons, Jaiseton Clemmons & Swan Sockey; special companion, Frances Clemons; sisters, Georgianna Polk, Virginia York, Latoya Willis, Audrianna Thomas, Stacey Isaac, & Nicole Isaac; extended sister, Lynette Willis; brother, George Polk, Jr.; extended brother, Craig Willis; a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

Survivors include his mother, Clettie Willis; sons, Craig Martin & Duane Martin; extended sons, Jaiseton Clemmons & Swan Sockey; special companion, Frances Clemons; sisters, Georgianna Polk, Virginia York, Latoya Willis, Audrianna Thomas, Stacey Isaac, & Nicole Isaac; extended sister, Lynette Willis; brother, George Polk, Jr.; extended brother, Craig Willis; a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

JOHNATHAN REDWREN WESLEY

Funeral services for Johnathan Redwren Wesley, 43, was held on Saturday, September 28, 2024, at Macedonia Baptist Church in Conehatta. Bro. Joseph Wesley & Rev. Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated.



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

Mr. Wesley passed away on Sept. 21 at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

He enjoyed playing volleyball, making others laugh, & being with family.

He is preceded in death by his father, Johnny Don Wesley; grandparents, John & Cecile Wesley, Susie Sockey & Arthur Lee Farmer, Sr.; & uncles, Edward J. Wesley, Danny Wesley, & Gilbert Bell, Sr.

Survivors include his mother, Sandra Rose Wesley; sisters, Erica Wesley, Sherina Wesley, & Sanisha Thomas; aunts, Joanne Ben & Janice Lewis; uncle, Jerry Wesley; 4 nieces, 3 nephews, & a host of relatives & friends.

BRANTLEY XAVIER WILSON

Funeral services for Brantley Xavier Wilson, 36, was held on Sunday, September 29, 2024, at Hope Indian Baptist Church in Pearl River. Deacon Williamson Isaac & Rev. Ricky Thompson, Sr.



officiated.

continued next page

officiated.

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

Mr. Wilson passed away on Sept. 23 at Anderson Hospital in Meridian.

A 2006 graduate of Choctaw Central High School, he enjoyed being with family & friends, playing stickball, and listening to music.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Harold Brant Willis, Sr. & Brenda Wilson; grandparents, R.L. Wilson & Addis Wilson, Edmond & Susie Willis; sister, Nikita Nicole Wilson; brother, Harold Brant Willis, Jr.; aunts, Monica Willis, Mary Sue Isaac, & Shirley Wilson; & uncles, Curtis Willis, Norman Wilson, R.L. Wilson, Jr., Harmon Ben, & Vincent Wilson.

Survivors include his sisters, LaNesha DeRaine Wilson & Brandy LeAnn Willis; aunt, Carolyn Steve; uncles, Tyler Willis & Kevin Willis, Sr.; 1 niece, 1 nephew, & a host of relatives & friends.

WOODLIN LEWIS

Funeral services for Woodlin Lewis, 83, was held on Monday, September 30, 2024, at the Pearl River Community Center. Bro. Shelly Peoples & Bro. Eddie Johnson officiated.

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

Mr. Lewis passed away on Sept. 24 at the Choctaw Health Center in Choctaw.

He was a member of Hope Indian Baptist Church & resided in the Pearl River community with his wife, Thallis Lewis. He was a 1964 graduate of Pearl River High School, now known as Choctaw Central High School. He earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree from

Tougaloo College in Jackson, Miss. He was employed in various positions, including working 40 years with the Tribe. He also served four terms as Pearl River Representative to the Choctaw Tribal Council.

He enjoyed being with his family, drawing, reading his Bible, listening to gospel music, fishing, cooking, & singing. He was an accomplished cultural artisan as he made traditional drums, rabbit sticks, stickball sticks, & blow guns with the darts. He was also a traditional social dance chanter.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Albert Lewis & Emma Bell Lewis; sisters, Rosie Frazier & Lou Jane Sam; brother, Walter Dean Lewis; two nieces, Lorria Frazier & Tasha Sam; & a nephew, Matthew Chad Lewis.

Survivors include his wife, Thallis Lewis; daughter, Jane Ben; four grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; nieces, Karren Sam & Kathy Sam; & a host of relatives and friends.

DELORNA DOREEN JEFFERSON

Funeral services for Delorna Doreen Jefferson, 48, was held on Monday, September 30, 2024, at 114 Chitto Cove in Standing Pine. Rev. Robert Patrick officiated.

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

Ms. Jefferson passed away on Sept. 24.

She grew up in the Red Water community & worked numerous jobs before becoming a homemaker. She enjoyed trying new recipes, reading, doing crossword puzzles, coloring, & painting. She loved being with



her son & family, & playing sports.


She was preceded in death by her parents, Hubert Lee Jefferson & Joanne Willis Jefferson.

Survivors include her son, Jody Blankenship; sisters, Yolandra Hickman & Alyssa Jefferson; brother, Eric Jefferson; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

MICHAEL "SHANE" JOHNSON

Funeral services for Michael "Shane" Johnson, 38, was held on Thursday, October 3, 2024, at the Standing Pine Community Gymnasium. Bro. Curtis Willis & Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.

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



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

Mr. Johnson passed away on Sept. 28 at the Choctaw Health Center in Choctaw.

He was a U.S. Army Veteran & enjoyed playing stickball & softball.

He is preceded in death by his father, David Connywerdy; & sister, Pollyanna Connywerdy.


Survivors include his mother, Mary Jim; daughters, Kaaya Johnson, Tamaran Johnson, Kristeena Thomas; sons, Jase Johnson, Jaidyn Johnson, & Jep Johnson; sister, Davianna Connywerdy; 1 grandchild, Ryland McDonald; & a host of relatives & friends.

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

Patrick graduates from MEFO Program



JACKSON, Miss.- Liaison Officer (LNO) Marco Patrick, (pictured right) of the Choctaw Fire Department continues to make a difference as he recently graduated from the Mississippi Executive Fire Officer (MEFO) Program at the Mississippi State Fire Academy (MSFA) in Jackson.

This program includes classroom & hands-on instruction covering four modules: Executive Development, Community Risk Reduction & Response Planning, Executive Analysis of Fire Service Operations & Emergency Management, & Capstone in Executive Leadership, Shaping the Future.

This course requires the students to identify & research an opportunity within their department or the Fire Service in general. The title of LNO Patrick’s research was, ‘An assessment for the need of an Official Fire Marshal for the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.’

The MEFO is a year-long course focused on leadership, emphasizing decision-making, strategic thinking, & teamwork. Grounded in research, the program prepares students for the future of the fire service through research to improve firefighting techniques which are crucial for navigating the complexities of the modern fire service operations.

“The graduates of the 2024 Mississippi Executive Fire Officers Program should be recognized for their hard work & dedication to their department & their communities,” said MSFA Deputy Director and Course Coordinator Barry Burnside.

CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

SEPTEMBER 2024

© 2024 MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS

Creative Christmas
 December 6 & 7, 2024
 Choctaw Shopping Center
 (Old Dollar General Store)
 Choctaw, MS

December 6, 2024, 8:00 am – 7:00 pm
December 7, 2024, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm

*For more information contact
 Department of Natural Resources
 Ronald Gibson or Candy Jimmie
 P.O. Box 6010 Choctaw Branch
 Choctaw, MS 39350*

Phone: 601.656.2070/9679/9599 Fax:601.650.1992

ronald.gibson@choctaw.org
candy.jimmie@choctaw.org

MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS 2024-2025 HUNTING & FISHING SEASONS

Hunting Season	Bag Limit
(A) Bobwhite Quail 11/28/24 – 03/01/25	8/day; 16 poss.
(B) Turkey, either sex 10/12/24 – 11/12/24 (Gobbler with 6-inch beard or longer)	1/day; 2/fall season
Turkey, Gobblers only 03/15/25 – 05/01/25 (Gobbler with 6-inch beard or longer)	1/day; 2/spring season
Youth Turkey 03/08/25 – 03/14/25 (May harvest 1 gobbler any age)	1/day; 2/spring season
(C) Squirrel 10/01/24 – 02/28/25 Youth Squirrel 09/24/24 – 09/30/24	8/day; 16 poss. 8/day; 16 poss.
(D) Deer – either sex	

ALL BUCKS MUST BE 6 POINTS OR HIGHER DURING THE 2024-2025 SEASON. Exception: Youth less than fifteen (15) years old and elders (56+ years old) may have harvest one (1) buck with any hardened antler, regardless of number of points, inside spread, or beam length. **Note: For deer hunting attire, all deer hunters must wear in full view a minimum of 500 square inches of solid unbroken fluorescent orange or solid unbroken fluorescent pink material during open gun seasons on deer.**

Bucks: Three (3) per season, one (1) per day
 Does: Six (6) per season, two (2) per day; with additional two (2) allowed with archery.

Archery Only	10/01/24 – 10/31/24
Youth (Gun)	10/19/24 – 10/31/24
Gun (without dog)	11/01/24 – 11/08/24
Gun (with dog)	11/09/24 – 12/01/24
Gun (without dog)	12/02/24 – 12/20/24
Gun (with dog)	12/21/24 – 01/26/25
Archery/Primitive/Gun (without dogs)	01/27/25 – 02/09/25

(E) Rabbit	10/12/24 – 02/28/25	8/day; 16 poss.
Cultural Rabbit stick with dogs	09/28/24 – 03/02/25	8/day; 16 poss.
(F) Fox, crow, blackbirds	No closed season	No limit
(G) Wild hog (No guns in October, Archery Only)	No closed season	No limit
(H) Opossum, raccoon, bobcat	10/01/24 – 02/28/25	No limit
Raccoon only	07/01/25 – 09/30/25	1/nightly; 2 poss.
(I) Frogs	04/01/25 – 09/30/25	25/nightly; 50 poss.
(J) Trapping	11/01/24 – 03/15/25	No limit

1.2 MIGRATORY BIRDS (includes Doves)

- Regulations and Season will follow federal and state requirements.