



Halito!
 I am truly thankful for not only my blessings personally, but also for all of our Tribe's blessings that we have received throughout this year. As we celebrate the upcoming holiday season, I encourage everyone to remember and be thankful for your blessings and to spend time with family and friends.
 October is Read Aloud Month, and I always look forward to visiting our Tribal elementary schools and reading to

our students. This year's book, Doug the Pug and the Kindness Crew, encouraged the youth to be kind to everyone they meet. I am pleased to note that our 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess, Miss Leilani Elyse Allen, also visited our Tribal elementary schools and read to students. Reading is very important to a child's education and growth, and I encourage families to make reading time an important tradition at home.
 October is also Breast Cancer Awareness Month and Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Breast cancer and domestic violence are realities we face, unfortunately, whether through personal experience or the experience of loved ones. Those who may be facing domestic violence, speak out and seek support to end the cycle of violence. For those battling breast cancer, I encourage you to find



Vaughn Wins Business Plan Competition
Congratulations to Dillon (DJ) Vaughn as he was named the winner of the Fast Start Program's Business Plan Competition. The program, hosted by the MBCI Office of Economic Development's Small Business Program, offers Tribal member entrepreneurs an opportunity to gain valuable information & assistance in starting their own business. At the end of the six-week course, entrepreneurs who developed a detailed plan were entered into a Business Plan Competition with the winner receiving \$1,000 to invest into their venture. Pictured, from left to right, are Anna Denson of the MBCI Office of Economic Development, Dillon Vaughn, & Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben.

strength in the support of those who stand by you. My thoughts and prayers are with the survivors of both breast cancer and domestic violence, as well as the families who have lost loved ones.
 Our community Trunk or Treat events were a great success, with our Tribal youth wearing their favorite Halloween costumes and eagerly awaiting the chance to receive candies and/or goodies from not only my office and Choctaw Tribal Council members,

but also various Tribal programs, departments, and other organizations. Thank you to everyone who participated. It was truly heartwarming to witness the excitement and happiness on the faces of our children.
 On Friday, November 1, the MBCI Department of Early Childhood Education (DOECE) hosted the Green Corn Celebration in the Bogue Chitto community. Students from our community Early

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:

**COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM
 P.O. BOX 6010
 CHOCTAW, MS 39350
 TELEPHONE: 601-663-7736**

Brian C. Willis
Communications Manager

Melford Farve
Communications Writer

Darron Tubby
Communications Photographer

Diana Solomon
Communications Photographer

Deon Denson
Communications Photographer

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.

Breast Cancer survivors honored

A Breast Cancer Awareness event was held during pre-game activities of Choctaw Central High School's Homecoming football game on Friday, Oct. 18. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen recognized Tribal members & breast cancer survivors for their strength, courage, & bravery in their fight against breast cancer. A moment of silence was held for those individuals who lost their battle. Pictured, from left to right, include survivors Louise Wilson, Karen Thomas, Brenda Stephens, Princess Allen, Chief Ben, Peggy Willis, Linda Peoples, Melanie Benn, Carla Bobo, & Marilyn York.



Childhood centers were dressed in their traditional Choctaw attire and danced several of our Choctaw social dances with their classmates and friends. I am so proud of our youngest Tribal members for carrying on our rich cultural heritage, and thanks to the DOECE staff for their hard work in putting together this great cultural event.

I commend the MBCI – Choctaw Veterans Association for their hard work and dedication in coordinating the 2024 Veterans Day Brunch, Parade and Ceremony on Friday, November 8. There are not enough words for me to express my appreciation for the numerous sacrifices made by our men and women who have served in the U.S. armed forces. Freedom is not free, and we are proud of these courageous individuals who answered the call to serve and defend our great nation and Tribe.

I was honored to host the Henning Community Thanksgiving Feast on November 2 and the Tribal-Wide Thanksgiving Feast on November 5. It was a joy to witness our Tribal members coming together to share a meal and fellowship together. Thank you to the Pearl River Resort staff for preparing and helping to serve the dinner, and thank you to all the organizers and the many volunteers who came together to make these two feasts a great success.



Ground was broken for a new Broadband Building to be constructed near the Office of Construction Management in the Pearl River community. The building is expected to be completed in Fall 2025.

Thank you to the Choctaw Health Center leadership team for serving as host to Indian Health Service Director Roselyn Tso on Wednesday, November 6. It was an honor to meet Director Tso and to discuss our Tribal healthcare system with her. In addition to touring the Health Center, Director Tso also took a driving tour of the Pearl River community and made a site visit to the Pearl River CERF building and got to see the Choctaw Fresh Produce Mobile Market. Thank you to Director Tso for visiting with us here on our Choctaw Tribal lands!

A groundbreaking was held for the new Broadband Building located near the Office of Construction Management in the Pearl River Community on Thursday, November 14. I, along with Princess Leilani, Tribal Council Members Vice Chief Ronnie Henry, Sr. (Bogue Chitto), Kent Wesley (Pearl River), Demando Min-

go (Tucker), Timothy Thomas, Sr. (Conehatta), and Sam John (Red Water), Director of Administration Jason Grisham, Chief Information Officer Adam Morrison, Development Division Director Sarah Medlock, Economic Development Director John Hendrix, and Office of Construction Management officials, gathered together to break ground for this new facility.

Once completed, the Broadband Building will be 12,400 total square feet – 5,000 sq. ft. of office space, 5,000 sq. ft. of warehouse space to store materials and supplies, and 2,400 sq. ft. awning at the rear of the building for storing equipment. The building will be located on 2 ¼ acres. Half of the facility will be heated, and the other half will be unconditioned shop space. There will also be a conference room, two bathrooms, four offices, and a workroom. The estimated cost of the project is \$2.7 million, grant fund-

ed by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) and is expected to be completed in Fall 2025. I am deeply grateful to all those who have worked diligently to plan and carry out this important project.

As we enjoy this season of thanksgiving and approach the Christmas holiday season, I am filled with so much pride and joy at what we have accomplished this year. Our blessings are abundant, and I look forward to what the future holds for our Tribe. Thank you to all of you for serving and supporting our Choctaw community. God bless you!

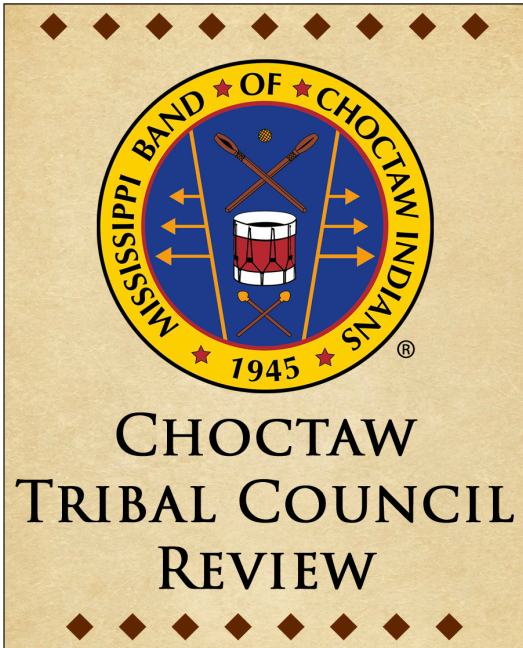
Chi Yakokilih,

Cyrus Ben, Tribal Chief

TVA officials visit Tribe

Officials from the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) met with MBCI Tribal officials at the Choctaw Tribal Headquarters on Thursday, Nov. 7. In addition to Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, TVA representatives met with MBCI Development Division Director Sarah Medlock, Chief Information Officer Adam Morrison, Economic Development Director John Hendrix, Public Works Director Reginald Shumaker, Chahta Immi Cultural Center Coordinator Cynthia Massey, & Choctaw Tribal Schools Acting Facilities/Transportation Coordinator Shelly Peoples. TVA officials received overviews regarding MBCI history, economic development & workforce history, & Tribal utilities.





**REGULAR CALL MEETING
OCTOBER 8, 2024**

RESOLUTION CHO 25-001(B), approving increases in blood degree & name changes for previously enrolled Tribal members, was ADOPTED - 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: *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 §22-3-11 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 five (5) MBCI Tribal members. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-002(B), amending both the number of newly enrolled MBCI Tribal Members & the total MBCI Tribal Membership reported in Resolution CHO 24-097(B), was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *Resolution CHO 24-097(B) incorrectly reported both the number of newly enrolled MBCI members & the total MBCI Tribal membership. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-003(B), enrolling Tribal Members, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves*

the enrollment of 33 new MBCI Tribal members beginning with K. Allen & ending with A. Willis. With the adoption of this Resolution, there are 11,066 enrolled members of MBCI. For more information, please contact the Office of Tribal Enrollment.

RESOLUTION CHO 25-004 (B), approving a Land Use Permit for D. Chick-away in the Conehatta Community, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves a one-year land use permit to D. Chick-away in the Conehatta Community. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-005 (B), approving a Land Use Permit for N. Thompson in the Pearl River Community, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves a one-year land use permit to N. Thompson in the Pearl River Community. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-006 (B), approving a Land Use Permit for V. Epting in the Pearl River Community, was

continued next page

GRANT continued from page one

of Environmental Protection for writing this grant that will now make a positive impact in their program and in homes of some of our Tribal Elders,” said Chief Ben. “The grant consists of four main projects which will contribute directly to greenhouse gas reductions through their specific actions.”

With approximately 11,000 Tribal members and 2,300 residential units spread across Choctaw Tribal lands, these projects will directly impact more than 300 homes belonging to Tribal elders and disabled individuals, who face heightened risks during power outages.

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians CPRG Implementation Grant will support

four greenhouse gas reduction measures to deliver substantial environmental, economic, and health benefits. Specific efforts will include installing solar heat pumps, upgrading appliances, enhancing biodiesel production, and improving recycling capabilities and efficiency.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

Energy Efficient

Improvements: Solar Direct Heat Pumps

The installation of solar-driven heat pumps in residential homes will provide much-needed cooling during the sweltering Mississippi summers, while also lowering electricity costs. The project aims to install solar powered supplemental heat pumps in 300 homes over five

years, resulting in a projected GHG reduction of 8,599 MT CO2e by 2050.

Home Appliance Efficiency

This initiative will replace outdated and non-electric appliances with energy-efficient electric models, targeting at-risk households first. The project anticipates a reduction of 13,129 MT CO2e in GHG emissions by 2050.

Enhancement & Expansion of Recycling Capabilities

MBCI plans to upgrade its recycling operations by acquiring new equipment, significantly improving efficiency, and reducing the GHG emissions associated with waste collection. This project is expected to result in a reduction of 250 MT CO2e by 2050.

Biofuel Infrastructure for Improved Production & Efficiency of Distribution

The revitalization of the Choctaw Biodiesel program will focus on collecting and processing waste oil to create a cleaner fuel alternative. This initiative is projected to yield a GHG reduction of 19,434 MT CO2e by 2050.

“We are excited to announce the award of this Climate Pollution Reduction Grant to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians,” said Gettle. “The projects funded by this grant will bring substantial environmental, economic, and health benefits to the Tribe and set a powerful example for communities across the nation.”

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

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves a one-year land use permit to V. Epting in the Pearl River Community. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-007 (B), approving a Land Use Permit for B. & E. Farmer in the Tucker Community, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves a one-year land use permit to B. & E. Farmer in the Tucker Community. For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-008, designating a site for a new Day Care Facility in the Pearl River Community, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *For more information, please contact the Real Estate Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-009, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Choctaw Health Center to apply for the FY 2024 Small Ambulatory Program Grant from the Department of Health & Human Services, Indian Health Service, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution authorizes the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to apply for grant funding from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Indian Health Service under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act. The Small Ambulatory Program grant funding will accommodate the growth of EMS' services & staffing, including training areas, additional bays for ambulances, work areas, & storage for equipment. Choctaw Health Center has developed a plan to construct a stand-alone emergency medical services building to relocate CHC's emergency medical technicians & paramedics, their equipment, & ambulances on the CHC campus in which the Tribe can benefit greatly from additional, external resources to construct the new EMS building. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Health Center.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-110, authorizing the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians' Choctaw Loan Program to apply for the Home Electrification & Appliance Rebates Program Funding from the U.S.

Department of Energy, Office of State & Community Energy Programs, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution authorizes the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to apply for grant funding from the U.S. Department of Energy-Office of State & Community Energy Programs for the purpose of awarding formula grants to Indian Tribes to develop & implement high-efficiency home rebate programs. The grant funding received through the Tribal Home Electrification & Appliance Rebates Program will be used for appliance upgrades that will lower utility bills & reduce indoor air pollution in low-and moderate-income Tribal households. For more information, please contact the Choctaw Loan Program.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-011, confirming appointments to the Tribal Election Committee, was ADOPTED - 16 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 1 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution affirms the reappointment of Berdie John as Chairperson, Wanda McMillan as a Member, & Gary Williamson as an Alternate member to the Tribal Election Committee with a term expiring on October 10, 2028. The appointments are four (4) year terms & end on the expiration date or until a successor has been duly nominated & confirmed for a subsequent term. For more information, please contact the Policy and Legislative Office.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-012, confirming appointments to the Choctaw Gaming Commission, was ADOPTED - 10 YES (L. Ahshapanek, C. Eaves, R. Henry, Sr., A. Hundley, S. John, D. Mingo, H. Nickey, G. Shoemake, T. Thomas, Sr., K. Wesley); 4 NO (R. Anderson, Sr., N. Gibson, D. Martin, K. Wallace); 2 ABSTAIN (R. Sockey, D. Wilson); 1 ABSENT (B. Steve).

SUMMARY: *The Resolution affirms the appointment of Gilbert Thompson as Chairman of the Choctaw Gaming Commission with a term expiring on December 31, 2028, & Elaina Fielder to serve as Associate Commissioner of the Choctaw Gaming Commission with a term expiring on December 31, 2028. The appointments shall become effective upon the adoption of this Resolution & said persons shall hold office until such time as his or her successor has been appointed by the Tribal Chief & confirmed by the Tribal Council. For more information, please contact the*

Policy and Legislative Office.

RESOLUTION CHO 25-013, confirming appointments to Choctaw American Insurance, Inc., was ADOPTED - 15 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); 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT (B. Steve, D. Wilson).

SUMMARY: *The Resolution affirms the reappointment of Nikki Comby to the Board of Directors for the Choctaw American Insurance, Inc. for a two-year term expiring on October 8, 2026. The appointment shall become effective upon the adoption of this Resolution & said person shall hold office until such time as his or her successor has been appointed by the Tribal Chief & confirmed by the Tribal Council. For more information, please contact Policy and Legislative Office.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-014, confirming an appointment to the Choctaw Residential Center Enterprise Board of Directors, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution affirms the appointment of Dr. Christina Wallace to the Board of Directors for the Choctaw Residential Center Enterprise for a term ending in October 2028. The appointment shall become effective upon the adoption of this Resolution & said person shall hold office until such time as his or her successor has been appointed by the Tribal Chief & confirmed by the Tribal Council. For more information, please contact the Policy & Legislative Office.*

RESOLUTION CHO 25-015, confirming an appointment to the Drug Prevention Initiative (DPI) Task Force, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution affirms the appointment of DeLaura Saunders to fill the vacant position & serve as a member of the Drug Preventative Initiative Task Force. The appointment shall become effective upon the adoption of this Resolution & said person shall hold office until such time as his or her successor has been appointed by the Tribal Chief & confirmed by the Tribal Council. For more information, please contact the Policy & Legislative Office.*

Breast Cancer Awareness at PRR

Associates at Pearl River Resort & Bok Homa Casino raised an impressive \$11,618 during Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October. Employees who participated in the annual campaign proudly wore Breast Cancer Awareness t-shirts & pink buttons. Associates also received pink ribbons to write messages of hope, the names of loved ones who fought the battle, or those still in the fight.

To further raise public awareness, over a thousand of the pink ribbons adorned the windows of the Silver

Star Casino promenade & the entrance of Bok Homa Casino. Associates also wore their Breast Cancer Awareness t-shirts every Friday throughout October.

Resort Executives expressed immense pride in the Associates & their contributions, highlighting the collective effort & dedication to this important cause. They were thrilled to present a check to the Mississippi American Cancer Society, demonstrating their commitment to supporting breast cancer awareness & research.



Pictured are, from left to right, Monty Permenter, Senior Development Manager, South Region of Mississippi American Cancer Society; Cheryl Steve-Smith, PRR Interim Chief Information Officer; Dr. Bianca Denson, PRR Vice President of Human Capital & Financial Development; Tim Hill, PRR Interim President & CEO; & Connie Deon, PRR Interim Chief Financial Officer.

CHC honored with IHS Director's Award for Patient Safety

Choctaw Health Center (CHC) is proud to announce their Quality Management Team has been awarded the Indian Health Service (IHS) 2023 Director's Award for Patient Safety. This prestigious award recognizes CHC's unwavering commitment to delivering the highest standards of care, ensuring patient safety across all departments, & demonstrating sustainment of high reliability principles.

"We are incredibly honored to receive this award," said Mary Harrison, Interim Health Director of CHC. "This recognition is a testament to the hard work & dedication of our entire team. Our focus on patient safety is at the core of everything we do, & this award underscores our commit-



Pictured above are members of CHC's Quality Management Team.

ment to providing the safest, highest quality care to our patients. This recognition not only honors the hospital's current achievements but also sets a benchmark for future endeavors in patient safety for the Choctaw people."

The award was announced by IHS Director Roselyn Tso during a ceremony at

IHS Headquarters in Bethesda, MD, on Aug. 30th.

The Director's Award is awarded to healthcare organizations in the IHS system that demonstrate exemplary performance in safeguarding patients & continuously improving safety protocols.

RESOLUTIONS continued from page five

RESOLUTION CHO 25-016, approving the 2025 Choctaw Community Fund Budget, was ADOPTED - 15 YES; 0 NO; 0 ABSTAIN; 2 ABSENT.

SUMMARY: *The Resolution approves the 2025 Choctaw Community Fund Budget in the amount of \$82,635 & authorizes the Choctaw Community Fund Coordinator to allocate any additional funds raised from vendors & general public donations to the Choctaw Community Fund. The purpose of the fund is to be of benefit to the needs of the com-*

munity & its members. For more information, please contact the Development Division.

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 cherie-na.ben@choctaw.org.

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

WIC OUTLYING COMMUNITY SCHEDULE

WIC participants or potential applicants can certify, re-certify and have benefits added to the eWIC card in the outlying communities.

PLEASE CALL THE WIC OFFICE FOR AN APPOINTMENT.

1ST WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Tucker CERF Building 9:00-11:30a (last sign in @ 10:45a)
Conehatta Clinic 1:00-3:30p (last sign in at 2:45p)

2ND WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Crystal Ridge Facility Building 9:00-11:30a (last sign in @ 10:45a)
Bogue Chitto Clinic 1:00-3:30p (last sign in at 2:45p)

3RD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Standing Pine Facility Building 9:00-11:30a (last sign in @ 10:45a)
Red Water Clinic 1:00-3:30p (last sign in at 2:45p)

To certify or re-certify, please bring child/self, proof of income, proof of ID and proof of residency.



MBCI WIC PROGRAM
210 Hospital Circle Choctaw, MS 39350
P: 601-389-4510 F: 601-389-4511



IHS Director Tso visits CHC

Indian Health Service (IHS) Director Roselyn Tso visited the Choctaw Health Center (CHC) on Wednesday, Nov. 6. She met & had lunch with Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Tribal Council members Vice Chief Ronnie Henry, Sr. & Angela Hundley, CHC officials, & Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen. Director Tso & CHC officials discussed the Tribal healthcare system as she was given a tour

of the CHC facility. Tribal Chief Ben presented Director Tso with a beautiful Choctaw basket & beaded medallion as tokens of appreciation for her visit. Director Tso also went on a driving tour of the Pearl River community. At the Pearl River CERF building, she visited the Choctaw Fresh Produce mobile market & spoke with manager Tomika Bell about the program. She toured the interior of the CERF building before the tour concluded back at the CHC.

SDPI Hosts Diabetes Awareness Walk/Run

Runners & walkers gathered to participate in the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) 28th Annual Fall 2-Mile Run/Walk on Saturday, Oct. 5. Participants completed the course which began at the Choctaw Central High School entrance to the Smith John Justice Complex side entrance & back to CCHS.

Overall winners were (female) Taysha Isaac & (male) Gavine Frazier. Winners in the following age categories are listed below.

7-Under: (female) 1st, Alaneya Willis; 2nd, Draylee Clemons; (male) 1st, Eisley Charlie; 2nd, Axle McMillan.

8-10 Years: (female) 1st, Macey Davis; 2nd, Onnahali Morris; (male) 1st, Calvin Willis; 2nd, Alston Meely.

11-15 Years: (female) 1st, Madison Charlie; 2nd, Adronai Lewis; (male) 1st, Channing Bloodsaw; 2nd, Josiah Wishork.

16-19 Years: (female) 1st, Ashlyn Stephens; 2nd, Catherine Thomas; (male) 1st, Izaiah Cotton; 2nd, Keynon Willis.

20-29 Years: (female) 1st, Jennaya Steve; 2nd, Allison Meely; (male) 1st, Kina Brings Plenty; 2nd, Quentin Nanaeto.

30-39 Years: (female) 1st,

Jasmine Comby; 2nd, Ashley Edwards; (male) 1st, Harlen Wallace; 2nd, Nehemiah Lewis.

40-49 Years: (female) 1st, Dyranda Jimmie; 2nd, Shanna Ben; (male) 1st, Randy Tangle; 2nd, Evavisto Balderas.

50-59 Years: (female) 1st, Marion Sockey; 2nd, Melissa Charlie; (male) 1st, Thomas Ben; 2nd, Jerod "Taco" Thompson.

60-64 Years: (female) 1st,

Brenda Tsosie; 2nd, Betty Dobbs; (male) 1st, Gordon Wil-
lis, Jr.

65-Over: (female) 1st, Cheryl Denson; 2nd, Gloria Williams; (male) 1st, Leonard Jimmie, Jr.; 2nd, Adolph Vivians.



SDPI hosts events for diabetes awareness

The Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) hosted several walk/run events promoting diabetes awareness. On Thursday evening, Oct. 24, a Monster Dash walk/run was held on the campus of the Choctaw Health Center (CHC). Participants were encouraged to dress in their best Halloween costume as they said BOO to diabetes and walked/ran one time around the CHC walking trail.

“Glow Walk for World Diabetes Day” was held during the early evening hours of Thursday, Nov. 14. Most participants wore or carried glow items as they ran/walked from the Pearl River Recreational Field, to the Manpower Building, and back. This year’s World Diabetes Day theme was “Diabetes & Well-Being,” as the event prioritizes support for those living with diabetes and promoting a healthier lifestyle. There are over 537 million people worldwide living with diabetes and participants made a difference by helping raise awareness.

T-shirts were distributed to those that pre-registered, and a light meal was provided at the conclusion of the events. Thank you to the SDPI staff for your tireless efforts in encouraging Tribal Members to fight against diabetes!



You're not alone. Help is available.

The holiday season can be filled with joy and celebrations. This time of year can also trigger difficult emotions, thoughts, or behaviors—which can affect your mental health and use of substances. Multiple studies have shown that levels of unhealthy drinking habits skyrocket during the holiday season for numerous reasons. More unhealthy substances consumed by vaping can also lead to severe health issues, whether it be Nicotine, THC, or the foreign ingredients used in vapes to create the flavors and smells. It is best for individuals, especially youth, to never try vaping. The possibility of addiction can lead to many risks such as brain development problems, popcorn lung, mental health struggles, and more. Please stay safe during this season! <3

Call Choctaw Behavioral Health at 601-389-4150 for support, we are here.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

SUPTRS BLOCK GRANT

This is a time to recognize and honor caregivers nationally, raise awareness around caregiving issues, educate communities, and work to increase support for our nation's caregivers.

Families are often the primary source of support for older adults and people with disabilities.

Watch out for these signs of caregiver stress:

- Feeling exhausted, overwhelmed, or anxious.
- Becoming easily angered or impatient.
- Feeling lonely or disconnected from others.
- Having trouble sleeping or not getting enough sleep.
- Feeling sad or hopeless, or losing interest in activities you used to enjoy.
- Having frequent headaches, pain, or other physical problems.
- Not having enough time to exercise or prepare healthy food for yourself.
- Skipping showers or other personal care tasks such as brushing your teeth.
- Misusing alcohol or drugs, including prescription medications.

Your health is important too. Self Care Tips for Caregivers:

- Be active.
- Eat well and drink plenty of water.
- Try to get 7-9 hours of sleep nightly.
- Try yoga or meditation during down time.
- Take time to do something you enjoy - watch a favorite TV show, read a book, or work on a hobby.
- Ask another family member or friend to step in or sign up the older person for an adult day care program.
- Take care of your own health - make that appointment you've been putting off.
- Be kind to yourself.

Call Choctaw Behavioral Health at (601)389-4150 if you or a loved one are struggling with mental health or addiction.

Tribe hosts annual Thanksgiving feast



It was a celebration of community, culture, and gratitude as Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians hosted the annual Tribal-Wide Thanksgiving Feast on Tuesday evening, November 5, 2024, at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw.

Tribal drummers lead a procession into the ballroom as members of Neshoba Central High School’s JROTC unit presented the U.S. and MBCI flags. Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen and Asa Jimmie served as co-emcees as Tribal youth Taelor Crosby of the Bogue Chitto community sang the National Anthem in the Choctaw language. Vice Chief Ronnie Henry, Sr., of the Bogue Chitto community, offered the invocation.

Chief Ben welcomed those in attendance and remarked on the procession of Tribal drums beating in unison as he referred to it as “the heartbeat of our people” and offered his appreciation to those continuing the traditional ways, such as making traditional attire, chanting, social dancing, and speaking the language.

“All of you that continue to carry on the torch of who we are, as Chahta people, being thankful is the key,” he said. “It makes us happy to know what we have and the many blessings we have each and every day.”

He added that we should be thankful, not only during the holiday season, but everyday. He was also thankful for the working relationship among leaders of the Tribe, local, state, and federal governments.

“We recently celebrated a grant from the EPA that will help our elders and other needs of the community. That’s just one of the many opportunities we are capitalizing by working government-to-government. Whether it’s local, state or on a federal level, I’m very appreciative, but it’s for you, the people. We’re very grateful for the opportunity, as leadership, that we work and represent you,”

said Chief Ben.

Noting that with the passage of the 2025 fiscal year budget, the Tribe will continue to provide resources needed for Tribal members. He then announced upcoming activities that include paving projects at local facility buildings and outdoor fitness areas in each Tribal community as he is committed to making sure Tribal members focus on their health and well-being.

“We talk about coming together and helping each other for the health of our lives. Whether it’s fighting diabetes or any other health concerns that comes before us, I encourage everyone to use these opportunities and resources.”

Chief Ben then spoke on the construction progress of the new Choctaw Central High School and Middle School and the recent ground breaking for a new broadband building to be constructed adjacent to the Office of Construction Management in the Pearl River com-

munity. With over 2,300 homes in the Tribal communities connected with broadband access, he said he was grateful for the response as Tribal students will have more access to resources to further their educational goals.

“As I traveled through the communities, whether if it was during Read Aloud Month in October, visiting day cares, coming to Spring Festivals, or the Green Corn Festival in Bogue Chitto, seeing the community come together and supporting our young people and each other is a great thing to see. Let’s be thankful for what we have and what the Lord has blessed us with. I take this opportunity to say thank you for giving us the opportunity to be leaders in your community. We, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, are the greatest Tribe in the United States,” added Chief Ben.

A State of the Tribe video

see FEAST, pg. 10

SHARPS DISPOSAL

Each year, approximately 90,000 people in the State of Mississippi administer to themselves at least 30 million injections for medical problems such as diabetes, allergies, arthritis, migraines, HIV, and Hepatitis C. Here are some ways to safely dispose of sharps.

- Place all needles and other sharps in a sharps disposal container immediately after they have been used.
- If you can not get an FDA-cleared sharps container, you can use an empty laundry detergent, bleach, antifreeze, fabric softener, or paint thinner container.
 - *Rinse the container three times to make sure it is free of any residual product before using.*
 - Do not use containers that puncture easy such as milk jugs, water bottles, glass containers, or soda cans.

How to discard a household container:

1. Close the lid tight and tape it.
2. Label the container “SHARPS” and “DO NOT RECYCLE”.
3. Place the container in the center of full trash bag and discard in regular trash.



Anya Anderson, 2024 Choctaw Central graduate, was honored as she received her state championship ring. Last April, Anderson won the 2024 MHSAA Class 4A State Powerlifting Championship in the 198 lb. weight division. Not pictured is Andrew Cotton, 2024 Choctaw Central graduate, as he repeated as Class 4A Shot Put Champion at the MHSAA State Track & Field Championships last May.

FEAST continued from page nine

highlighting the progress and achievements of the Tribe in 2024 was presented by the Office of Public Information.

A special presentation was made on behalf of the Choctaw Central High School Athletic Department as they awarded 2024 MHSAA state championship rings to Class 4A State Powerlifting Champion Anya Anderson and Class 4A State Shot Put Champion Andrew Cotton. Anderson become Choctaw Central's first female powerlifting champion as she lifted a total weight of 790 lbs. Cotton became a repeat champion in the shot put event at the state track and field champion-



Members of the Chahta Alla Youth Council & On to the Next Challenge group were recipients of a \$2,000 check presented by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen to assist with future community service projects.

ships as he threw for a Class 4A state record distance of 50 feet, 10 inches.

Entertainment was provided by the Chahta Alla Youth Council Social Dancers as they performed several traditional

social dances. Chahta Alla, sponsored by the Youth Opportunity Program (YOP), is comprised of ambitious Choctaw youth

continued next page



2024 Pushmataha Division Champion - Beaver Dam



2024 Tulli Okchi Ishko Division Champion - Bok Cito

Henning Thanksgiving Feast

The Henning Community Thanksgiving Feast was held at the Henning Multi-Purpose Building on Saturday, Nov. 2. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, along with Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen, Choctaw Tribal Council members Angela Hundley & Kent Wesley, & other Tribal officials, joined community members to give thanks for blessings received throughout the year. Attendees enjoyed Choctaw traditional social dancing & eating a delicious Thanksgiving meal. Door prizes were given throughout the program, including cash prizes from Tribal Chief Ben & family. Prior to the feast, a health fair was held at the Henning CERF Building, with various departments of the Choctaw Health Center participating, as well as representatives from other Tribal programs.





2024 Men's 35-Over Division Champion - Koni Hata



2024 Men's Division Champion - Pearl River

focused on community service, cultural preservation, peer support, and much more. YOP also sponsors the “On to the Next Challenge” group that supports Tribal youth in college and career readiness. Led by Robert Ben, several of the students volunteered as servers for the evening. Chief Ben and Princess Allen presented the group with a check for \$2,000 to assist with future community service projects.

Champions from the 2024 World Series Stickball (WSS) divisions were honored as they received championship banners from Chief Ben, Princess Allen, and WSS Commissioner Thomas Ben. Champions honored included: Beaver Dam, Pushmataha



2024 Women's Division Champion - Bok Cito Ohoyo

Division (10-13); Bok Cito, Tulli Okchi en’s Division; and Pearl River, Men’s Division (14-17); Koni Hata, Men’s 35-Over Division; Bok Cito Ohoyo, Wom-

Tribe holds parade honoring Vets

Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces were honored for their services as the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Choctaw Veterans Association hosted the annual Veterans Day Parade on Friday, Novem-

ber 8, 2024, in Choctaw.

This year’s parade theme was “Honoring Our Women Veterans,” as entries started the parade route at the Choctaw Sportsplex parking lot, traveling south on Black Jack Road

and ending at the Choctaw Veterans Memorial Wall, located on the south parking lot of Geyser Falls Water Theme Park.

A ceremony was held at the conclusion of the parade as reigning Choctaw Indian Prin-

cess Leilani Elyse Allen served as mistress of ceremonies. After the posting of the American and Tribal flags by members of the Choctaw Veterans Color Guard, Choctaw Central High School Senior Ajay Lewis

see PARADE, pg. 12



Tribal Veterans in attendance had a group photo taken in front of the Veterans Memorial with Chief Ben & Princess Allen.

PARADE continued from page eleven

performed the National Anthem in Choctaw as Pastor Thomas Ben offered the invocation.

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben recognized parade participants for honoring veterans and giving them the proper spotlight they deserve.

“Many times they do not get the honor and recognition they deserve because they walk beside us daily in their civilian wear, and you never know,” said Chief Ben. “They stepped up to answer the call of duty, whether it was on foreign or

domestic soil. They served and protected the freedoms we enjoy each and everyday.”

Chief Ben led a round of applause to acknowledge all veterans in attendance, as well as offering appreciation to service members who are currently on active duty.

“We live our daily lives, with the freedoms we have, because these men and women continue to fight and make sacrifices. They may sacrifice time together, family events, community events, traditional events, but it’s because of their passion that



Pictured, from left to right, guest speaker U.S. Army SFC Shamilia Isaac, & parade grand marshals U.S. Navy Veteran Meritza Shumake & U.S. Army Veteran Valarie Sam Sutton.

they love this country. They are truly blessed to be a warrior.”

Chief Ben added, “Many things have happened throughout the history of the United States, history of Native peo-

ple, but yet we overcome and went beyond. Native people were used in many ways to win wars and accomplish tasks. We continue to do so today. To the men and women, we say thank you and happy Veterans Day. May we always give you thanks everyday and may God Bless you and your families.”

U.S. Army Sergeant First Class (SFC) Shamilia Isaac, a native of the Pearl River community, was the featured speaker as she spoke of her mindset of being a soldier for the past 15 years.

“It’s not easy to wear this uniform or lace up your boots up everyday. It’s a privilege. There are times we go through things and we surpass that time and we often think, what’s next? And when we think of that, we think of the support, foundation, tradition, and culture. I stand before you today as a 15-year service member of the U.S. Army and I ventured to many places where people may never go. I have learned a lot of different things and gained many ideas, and I’m not done yet. I am very humbled and honored to be here. Being a Choctaw woman in uniform in this big world is not easy, but with everybody’s support, I stand here today. I am very happy to be a part of this beautiful tribe,” said SFC Isaac.

This year’s parade grand marshals, selected by the Choctaw Veterans Association, were



Chief Ben & Princess Allen are pictured with the poster contest winners, from left to right, Adult Category - 1st place, Shelbi Bell; 2nd place, Meritza Shumake; Student Category - 1st place, Greatone Ben; & 2nd place, Alexis Smith.



Veterans Day Brunch held at convention center

A Veterans Day Brunch honoring all who served was held on Friday, Nov. 8, at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw. Hosted by Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, the brunch was open to all MBCI Tribal Veterans & a guest as the buffet-style meal was provided by Pearl River Resort. Choctaw Indian Princess Lailani Elyse Allen served as mistress of ceremonies & the Choctaw Veterans Color Guard presented the colors. Nana Frazier sang the National Anthem in the Choctaw language, followed by Bro. Shelly Peoples giving the invocation. Offering remarks included Chief Ben, U.S. Army Col. Christian Patterson, & Red Water Tribal Council Representative Ricky Anderson, Sr., Committee on Community & Family Services and Veterans Affairs Chair. MBCI Director of Tribal Member Services Division & U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Rick Alex led the presentation of commemorative challenge coins to veterans in attendance. Choctaw Veterans Affairs Director Sammie Wilson & Chief Ben gave closing remarks to conclude the program. RIGHT, Col. Patterson was presented a Choctaw basket as a token of appreciation for serving as guest speaker at the brunch.



continued next page

Meritza Shumake (U.S. Navy) and Valarie Sam Sutton (U.S. Army). They, along with guest speaker SFC Isaac, were presented with Choctaw baskets as tokens of appreciation for their service.

Awards were presented to this year's parade entry and poster contest winners.

Winners in the following parade categories included: (float) Red Water Elementary School; (vehicle) Choctaw Transit; and (walking) Choctaw Central High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Parade judges Jay Wesley, Wilma Simpson-McMillan, and Sharlyn Spencer were recognized as they received a token of appreciation for their duties.

In the poster contest, placing



Pictured above are parade walking category winners Choctaw Central High School Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

RIGHT, from left to right are representatives for float category winners Red Water Elementary School & vehicle category winners Choctaw Transit.



in the adult category were Shelbi Bell, 1st place, and Meritza Shumake, 2nd place. In the student category, placing 1st was

Greatone Ben of Tucker Elementary School. Placing 2nd was Alexis Smith of Conehatta Elementary School.

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

Veterans Day events held in Choctaw

Events honoring our Veterans were held during Veterans Day weekend in Choctaw. **RIGHT**, In addition to the Veterans Day brunch & parade, the 2024 Veterans Day Pow-Wow was held in the Pearl River community on Friday & Saturday, Nov. 8-9. Initially, the pow-wow was held at the Pearl River Recreation Field, but inclement weather forced the event into the Pearl River Recreation Gymnasium. Dancers competed for cash awards in several dance categories in the youth, adult, & golden age divisions. **BELOW LEFT**, A Veterans Day Fun Run, organized by the Choctaw Veterans Association, was held on Saturday morning, Nov. 9. Participants began the run from the Choctaw Veterans Memorial, down Black Jack Road, then returned to the memorial. Top finishers in the women's division were Charlita Gibson, Monique Bell, Brittney Ferguson, & Nastassia Isaac. In the men's division, top finishers were Logan Lyons, JaBastian Ben, Jeremy Clark, & Leonard Jimmie. **BELOW RIGHT**, The Choctaw Veterans Association hosted their 3rd Annual



3-Man Golf Tournament on Monday, Nov. 11, at The Oaks at Dancing Rabbit Golf Club. Teams enjoyed a day of golfing & fellowship as all the proceeds from the entry fees & sponsorships went to support future activities for Veterans & the Choctaw Veterans Association.





DOECE hosts Green Corn Festival

The 32nd Annual Green Corn Festival, hosted by Bogue Chitto Head Start Program & MBCI Department of Early Childhood Education (DOECE), was held at the Bogue Chitto community gymnasium on Friday, November 1, 2024. Choctaw children from the area early childhood centers performed traditional Choctaw social dancing in their traditional attire. Joining family & community members were Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Vice Chief Ronnie Henry, Sr., Choctaw Tribal Council members, Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen, DOECE Director Tina Routh, & DOECE staff members. Attendees

were treated to a traditional to-go meal at the community CERF building at the conclusion of the program. The Green Corn Festival derives from the Green Corn Ceremony that was celebrated by our ancestors. The ceremony was a time for forgiveness as feuds were settled to begin a new year & to give thanks for a good harvest. This celebration lasted 3 to 5 days & consisted of dancing, games, stick-ball, & feasting. The event eventually became the annual Choctaw Indian Fair. The Green Corn Festival was established to introduce Choctaw customs to the younger generation & show appreciation of the culture through dance & feasting.

MAAP SCORES continued from page one

classroom get highlighted and have the spotlight on them and their achievements, especially earning perfect scores. That’s not something you see every-day.”

Chief Ben added, “We are very proud of our Choctaw Tribal Schools, and this is a tribute to not only the students, but the parents and guardians for supporting them at home, and also our teachers and administrators of each campus for providing the environment and resources in educating for our students.”

Honorees were presented medallions by Chief Ben. They are listed below.

- BOGUE CHITTO
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
Brydon Baca, Math; & Terry Bounds, Math.
- CHOCTAW CENTRAL
HIGH SCHOOL**
Kanyon F. Tubby, Algebra I; Heaven Hodges, Writing; &



- James Hickman, Writing.
- CHOCTAW CENTRAL
MIDDLE SCHOOL**
Wyatt Chickaway, Math; Ansen McMillan, Math; Riley Meely, Math; & Bryceton McMillan, Math.
- CONEHATTA
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
Kinsley King, ELA; Zoe Wallace, Math; & Alexis Smith, Math.
- PEARL RIVER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

- Kaycson Clemons, ELA; Marin Williams, ELA; Kodchakorn “Padme” Billie, Math; Kason Isaac, Math; Rainee Billy, Math; & Neyalih Dixon, Math.
- RED WATER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
Miley Dixon, Math.
- TUCKER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**
Eve Lewis, Math; Marshall Mingo, Math; & Braeson Sam, Math.

The following Tribal schools were also honored for achieving high scores in their respective subjects.

For ELA proficiency, Red Water Elementary ranked first, followed by Pearl River Elementary second, and Tucker Elementary third.

For Math proficiency, Pearl River Elementary ranked first, followed by Red Water Elementary second, and Tucker Elementary third.

CTS announces honor rolls

The Choctaw Tribal Schools recently recognized students named to the first nine-weeks honor roll for the 2024-2025 school year. Students recognized on the Chief's List (all A's), Principal's List/Honor Roll (all A's & B's), and Perfect Attendance at their respective schools are listed below.

CONEHATTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Chief's List

First grade - Alandria Anderson, Aiden Chickaway, Emmalyn Chickaway, Conner Christie, Shanaya Farmer, Luke Lasarge, I'zyus Thomas, Shavaeh Thomas, Sydus Willis, Savvy Yazzie.

Second grade - Jessie Bell, Steven Bell, Kayden Flores, Deshanalie Isaac, Sierra Lewis, Nyri Phillips, J'rayus Wesley, Nylesden Yazzie.

Third grade - Danario Bell, Hannah Crosby, Aiden Dixon, Cheri Hicks, April Lewis, Bryten Jefferson, Tobias John, Gracelynn McMillan.

Fourth grade - Zoe Wallace,

Ka'draizlyn Williams.

Seventh grade - Kinsley King.

Eighth grade - Alexis Smith.

Principal's List

First grade - Ansley Billy, Micah Crosby, Justice Hall, Malaysia Hickman, Aria Jenkins, Jaylynn Jim, Galen Smith, Ivory Sockey, Messiah Thomas, Verron Tubby.

Second grade - Zellar Dixon, Jaychel'le Evans, Paisley Jefferson, Brayson Lewis, Jalayah Lewis, Alarie Morris, Maizuri Phillips, Aiden Shoemake, Kaiden Shoemake.

Third grade - Raydon Bell, Da'nylie Ben, Ettalyn Chickaway, Ameira Edwards, Shelnaliya Frazier, Desanaye Isaac, Hayzley Johnson, Christian Mingo, Jaycee Shoemake, Espyn Stephens, Devante Tubby, Gracie Wilson.

Fourth grade - Kashay Charlie, Deanalyn Chickaway, Davaeaya Christie, Kari Hicks, Laney Jefferson, Langston Logan, Namiayah Tubby, Peyton Wesley, Kelane Willis, Janice Wilson.

Fifth grade - Arianna Dixon, Taliani King, Dracen McMillan, Jayzin Shoemake, Ori Stephens, Charlaya Steve, Kayden Thomas, Trevor Thomas.

Sixth grade - Jay Shoemake, Jr.

Seventh grade - Kaelynn Chickaway, Midnite Hall, Ny-lie Phillips.

Eighth grade - Carson Jimmie, Daysen Shoemake, Jaycee Shoemake, Elias Williamson, Xandria Wallace, Kinsley Thomas.

CHOCTAW CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL Principal's List

Seventh grade - Rodgri-ck Anderson, Paizley Dixon, Jayden Hardy, Caybriana Hickman, Karyton Hudson, Daislin Isaac, Sanaeya Martin, Leim McMillan, Kaylene Willis.

Eighth grade - Konley Anderson, Bryson Billie, Wyatt Chickaway, Nikolai Denson, Kaizlyn Harden, Brandon Lewis, Ansen McMillan, Riley Meely, Tekhyius Primer, Khan-lee Richardson, Ameer Stell, Nico Wesley, Arizona Willis.

Perfect Attendance

Rodgrick Anderson, Bryson Billie, Sherman Billie, Janay-la Billy, Kyla Briscoe, Riley Clemons, Deemarcus Comby, Nikolai Denson, Zanayah Denson, Kenzo Dixon, Paizley Dixon, Kaizlyn Harden, Caybriana Hickman, Elvira Hickman, Denaysia Isaac, Jaden Isaac, Sanaeya Martin, Ryden McGee, Ansen McMillan, Easlin Nickey, Tekhyius Primer, Ladanian Rodriguez, Trissa Thomas, Janiya Tubby, Taven Tubby, Na'Zayliya Wesley, Azariah Williams, Drew Williams, Amerie Willis, Angel Willis, Arizona Willis, Destiny Willis, Hector Willis, Jaden Willis, Kaylene Willis, Trina Wilson.

PEARL RIVER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL Chief's List

First grade - Ky'Emri Bell, Qeyahli Grant, Zavion Hickman, Kayleigh Isaac, Janaya Jim, Koi Morris, Armani Tubby, Dylan Clemons, Zayvian Denson, Harmony Dixon,

see HONOR ROLL, pg. 16

CTS Read Aloud Events

Numerous Tribal officials & individuals took part in this year's Read Aloud Month activities in the local Choctaw Tribal Schools during October. Among those participating were Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen. Studies show that when you read aloud together, you build up your child's "word bank" of vocabulary. You also introduce them to formal grammar & sentence structures (which might not be as apparent in our day-to-day conversation.) By reading consistently to a child, you improve their readiness to learn & give them the basic literacy skills to succeed in school. Some benefits of reading aloud include: language development; literacy skill building; instilling a love of reading; brain development; knowledge gained & shared; & personal bonding.



Fun at 2024 Fall Harvest Fest

On October 15-18, 2024, the Department of Natural Resources/Agriculture Extension Program hosted Fall Harvest Fest at the Department of Natural Resources facilities & Lake Pushmataha in the Pearl River community. Over 600 Pre-Kindergarten through second grade students & teachers from the Choctaw Tribal Schools participated in four fun-filled days of fall activities. The event was funded through a grant from the Choctaw Community Fund. Since 1998, the Department of Natural Resources has offered fun, educational activities specifically for students in the younger grades. In addition to receiving goodies from Tribal departments & programs, the highlight was taking a hayride across the road to the grounds of Lake Pushmataha as cutouts of their favorite animated characters were on display. Everybody had a great & memorable time!



HONOR ROLL continued from page fifteen

Eason Hickman, Bella Jimmie, Landon Johnson, Malakai McMillian, Elanna Tubby, Z'Davion Frazier, Honoree Lewis, Esther Wilson, Sa'Marion Wilson, J'than Cotton, Blakelyn Deon, Paistyn Dixon, Mattie Montoya, Kheita Samuel, Otter Shore, Aivlyn Tubby, Ava Vermilyea, Simeon Willis.

Second grade - Imayya Alex, Torrence Farmer, Maegan Hernandez, Majesty Isaac, Emma Johnson, Karalane Willis, Liam Willis, Malayah Anderson, Shantel Clemons, Nevaeh Dixon, Maelyn Henry, Juana Pablo-Lewis, De'andre Tubby, Ivyona Tubby, Haiden Willis, Marcin Billy, Traiy'tin John, Alaire Ketcher, Aeston Martin, Onnesy McMillan, Anilah Tubby, Jaysa Gibson.

Third grade - Jayden Anderson, Zayvier Wesley-Gamarra, Kleilali Dixon.

Fourth grade - Tomatoa Bald Eagle, Mylee Ben, Ashlyne

McMillan, Maydream York, Kaiseton Shell.

Fifth grade - Marin Williams, Eva Willis, Hayes Gordon, Raine Billy, Shohmalali Dixon, Mi'Kel Osceola, Madalynn Jimmie, Mariah McBeath, Hazzen Thomas, Neilani Thompson.

Sixth grade - Iylah King, Manali'i Bald Eagle, Khalon Edwards, Natanya Allen, Laiya Willis, Kady Hickman, A'mi Clemons, Anzaerius Huddleston, Chanceton Shoemake, Hunter John, Payton Meely, Jaciryn Vaughn, D'Anthony Willis.

Principal's List

First grade - Jason Billy, Zai-ley Davis, Arrow McMillan, Oakley Willis, Ericson Bell, Jakellin Perkins, Cyan Thompson, Armoni Anderson, Aama-ya Ben, Mia Bryant, Phoebe Gibson, Creighton Thomas, Kaydreus Gibson, Ella Hickman.

Second grade - Kiiyon Cuellar, Chloe Dixon, Hamaya Polk, Zaraylie Tubby, Lawson Williams, Gabriel Brown, Pailyn Eaves, Na'Tyiah Gibson, Kohen Routh, Tushkahoma Thomas, Tru Williams, Amira-cle Edwards, Gracelyn Frazier, Alayna Jim, Kelcedi John, Kamila Pablo-Lewis, Khyon Williams, Maeleiana Williams, Telayli Smith, Koi Bell, Daylen Rodriguez, Kazyon Willis, Rayen Willis, Adonai York.

Third grade - Semaycelynn Bell, Hayden Dixon, Kysen Dixon, Ayame Jim, Ashmariah McMillan, Taurasi Sardina, A'marion Wesley, Khalani Isaac, Remington Isaac, Hush-toposhik McMillan, Alston Meely, Kaison Thomas, Carly Baker, Knnox Bell, Aiyanna Chandler, Kemper Stafford, Aceton Willis, Keyon Willis, William Wilson, Denaje Bell, Ethan Hickman, Piper Isaac, Cadence Meely.

Fourth grade - Jayce Isaac, Xaiden Leach, Hamaya Morris, Lane Willis, Cecin Anderson, Christopher Barojas, John Luke Billy, Dakaizlee Clemons, Braycen Cutler, Sophia Diaz, Kaylee McMillan, Cainen Reynolds, Javonni Willis, Baylan Buffalomeat, Teyana Clemons, Kason Isaac, Garrett Johnson, Krymsen McMillan, Kyler Willis, Padmae Billie, Kaycson Clemons, Ahlaric Hernandez, Ambriauna Hickman, Riley Isaac, Kylus John, Kaeden Marshall.

Fifth grade - Neyalih Dixon, Maya McWilliams, Saniyah Nickey, Cayzrea Stoliby, Lyla Tubby, Jakaus Bell, Najsali Cuellar, Adelyn Daniel, Alice Ferris, Collyns McMillan, Lilia Thompson, Charlee Wallace, Dreyne Williams, Zaine Bell, Kolvin Isaac, Hazelin Joe, Brydan Lewis, Elilee Steve,

continued next page

PFE Board holds meeting

Tia Grisham, Parent & Family Engagement (PFE) Chair, called the board meeting to order at 11:46 a.m., at Ayipa Café located in the C-TEC Complex in Choctaw. Twenty-five board members & guests enjoyed a delicious meal served by the culinary students & their teacher, Marinda Woodruff.

Elijah Ben, Tucker Elementary School Principal, is serving his first year as principal at Tucker. A resident of Pearl River community, he is a proud graduate of



Pictured, from left to right, are Assistant Director of Schools Trina Cheatham, Director of Schools Delnita Jones, & Tucker Elementary School Principal Elijah Ben.

Choctaw Central High School. He furthered his education at Mississippi State University & is anticipating the completion of his Doctoral Degree in Education Leadership in December 2025.

“I’m glad I’m at Tucker Elementary. I think of the students as my babies. I don’t want to leave Tucker Elementary,” stated Ben.

Title I Coordinator Heather Adams introduced guest speaker Terisa Pittman, Senior Program Specialist with Thrive Way Path Peer Helpers Plus. The Thrive Way program is a multi-tiered system which equips all students with life skills & solutions for bullying, abuse, mental health, suicide, & substance abuse at each grade level.

This innovative program, which focuses on students helping their peers learn how to refer problems to trusted adults, will be utilized in all

see PFE MEETING, pg. 18



Pictured, from left to right, are Director of Schools Delnita Jones, Assistant Director of Schools Trina Cheatham, Thrive Way Program Specialist Terisa Pittman, & Title I Coordinator Heather Adams.



Serving the luncheon were second year culinary arts students, from left to right, Charles Tubby, Araceli Reyes-Cruse, Peyton Bell, Kamris Sockey, & instructor Marinda Woodruff.

Anna'Laiya Tubby, Kaythan Allen, Okshomichi Bell, Mahaylie Clemons, Rudell Cotton, Alleigh Dixon, Ethan Gibson, Brayson King, Colie Willis, Nolan Willis.

Sixth grade - Andym Big Pond, Aloni Dan, Jraythan Dixon, Traih'sin John, Paeton Gibson, D'Analyn Bell, Hezekiah Ben, Amyree Johnson, Kyzler Nickey, Felicianna Orduno, Dawson Tubby, E'miley Tubby, Kazden Ben, Deonte Isaac-Carter, Jordana Polk, Colton Thomas, Annaleigh Tubby, Ava Waiter, Jaric Anderson, Truin Dixon, Xavian John, Alicia Stell, Randalin Wilson.

RED WATER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Chief's List

First grade - Maddi Dear, Demeyah Johnson, Jakyrie Lewis, Eliza Tangle, Jerrion Willis.
Fourth grade - Isabelle Flint.

Sixth grade - Serena Tubby.
Seventh grade - Nylah Wilson.

Principal's List

First grade - Na'Lijah Amos, Dennis Dixon, Kyla Gibson, Gunner Grisham, Lincoln Sockey.

Second grade - Lynlee Bell, Maila Chickaway, A'lannah Evans, Alaneya Willis.

Third grade - Aiyanna Chandler, Landry Wilson.

Fourth grade - Macey Davis, Miley Dixon, Priceton Gibson, Ellynn Grisham, Zaenillah Lopez, Caiden Sampson, Zayden Willis.

Fifth grade - Brayon Billie, Helena Gibson, Messiah Greene, Romeo Lopez, Shaylin Shumake, Ja'Zairen Solomon.

Sixth grade - Maizeylyn Chickaway, Zuri Flint, Bayleigh Nickey, Cayson Willis, Jayceon Willis.

Eighth grade - Jadyne Joe, Leverna Nickey, Reagan Willis.

Perfect Attendance

Lynlee Bell, Kajun Burnside, Atticus Jim, Abr'yanna Lewis, Romeo Lopez, Bella Millsaps, Bayleigh Nickey, Wyatt Nickey, Harley Shumake, Serena Tubby, Jazlina Willis, Nylah Wilson.

TUCKER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Chief's List

First grade - Kenton Bell, Kayden Billy, Ava Gibson, Vatinna Isaac, Kayelin McMillan, Caroline Sikes, Tamia Taylor, Bri'naylin Thomas, Trevor Tubby, Jacaiya Willis, Vyla Willis, Xavier Wishork.

Second grade - Eisley Charlie, KoiDe Isaac, Asylem Jefferson, Zoey Jim, Bonnie Orellana, La'Deitra Orellana, Kelise Perry, MaTayah Stokes, Noah Tubby, Julyssa Willis.

Fourth grade - Kennedy Fields.
Seventh grade - Lindraya

King.

Eighth grade - Vashunti McMillan, Esmaralda Mingo.

Principal's List

Second grade - Carter Dixon, John Chase Isaac, Bryncess Thomas, Darrell Thomas, Jr.

Third grade - Necie Charlie, Bresaya Isaac, Kasey Nickey, Cliff Willis, Jr.

Fourth grade - Keilani Gibson, Taylia Henry, Cooper Jefferson, Eve Lewis, Faithlyn Mingo.

Fifth grade - Nathaniel Amos, Jr., Renaya Farmer, Arialyn Henry, Liam Thomas, Carter York.

Sixth grade - Paycen Comby, Braydon Farmer, Mylah Gibson, Emma Isom, A'Ria McMillan, Crisney Perry, Brayden Sam, Merlainey York.

Seventh grade - Greatone Ben, Arianna Charlie, Taylee Charlie, Madelynn Henry, Elliana Tubby, Camila Claire Willis.

"Little Brother of War" premieres

A red carpet premiere of the documentary "Little Brother of War" took place at the Silver Star Convention Center in Choctaw on Thursday evening, Oct. 3. The film, produced by 13 South Productions, features the traditional Choctaw game of stickball & follows two stickball players, Elijah Jimmie of Bok Cito & Casey Bigpond of Pearl River, as they prepare for & compete in the World Series Stickball tournament at the 2018 Choctaw Indian Fair. Various individuals, including Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, share their recollections, anecdotes, & historical information about America's oldest field sport. Following the premiere, a Q&A ses-

sion was held with film producers & participants. Additional free screenings were held Oct. 4-5 at the Silver Star Convention Center & Oct. 13 at the Two Mississippi Museums (Museum of Mississippi History & Mississippi Civil Rights Museum) in Jackson. A special screening in celebration of Native American Heritage Month was held at the historic Ellis Theater in Philadelphia on Nov. 23. The event was presented by Marty Stuart's Congress of Country Music, in collaboration with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Philadelphia-Neshoba County Tourism, & the Philadelphia-Neshoba County Arts Council.



TRIBE PARTICIPATES IN NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH ACTIVITIES

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians received requests from various schools, hospitals, clubs, businesses and other organizations to offer presentations on the Tribe, its history, current status and culture. The following are from several of the visits made by Tribal officials and program representatives.



PFE MEETING continued from page seventeen

of the Tribal Schools. Conehatta Elementary School successfully piloted Peer Helpers last year.

Delnita Jones, Director of Schools, gave the following school updates:

- The Choctaw Tribal Schools celebrate accomplishments while acknowledging any weaknesses;
- The Choctaw Tribal Schools work toward perfection each day;
- Our concept is... TEAM WORK! We want only the best for our students;
- We have been preparing for our new schools, Choctaw Central Middle School & High School, for years. It is fast becoming a reality;
- The Choctaw Tribal Schools have nine elec-

tric buses acquired through a grant exchange program where the Tribe exchanged outdated buses for new electric buses.

The following business were discussed:

- Denise John was elected as PFE Chair for 2024-2025;
- Victoria Billie will serve as PFE Co-Chair for 2024-2025;
- Magda Bell, of Bogue Chitto Elementary School, was selected Outstanding Choctaw Educator for December.

Next board meeting will be Dec. 4 at Ayipa Café.

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



NAHM presentation at Two Mississippi Museums

A delegation from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians traveled to the Two Mississippi Museums (Museum of Mississippi History & Mississippi Civil Rights Museum) in Jackson on Nov. 21. The group, consisting of staff from the Office of Public Information & the Department of Chahta Immi, along with Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen, & Dan Isaac & the Mystic Wind Social Dancers, offered presentations & interactive cultural activities to students from Columbus, Jackson, Madison, Raymond, & Amite, & Noxubee counties. These activities were held in observance of Native American Heritage Month (NAHM). Thank you to the Two Mississippi Museums for the invitation to showcase our rich cultural heritage & thank you to all presentation participants for a job well done!



Princess visits Ripley School for NAHM

Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen visited Ripley Elementary School in Ripley, TN & participated in a Native American Heritage Month presentation on Tuesday, Nov. 12. She was joined by the West Tennessee Social Dancers, local tribal royalty, & Fred Willis

from the MBCI Office of Public Information. Students learned about the Tribe, its history, current status, & culture. Thank you to Princess Leilani & fellow presenters for sharing information about the Tribe to expand students' knowledge!



NAHM at Armstrong Jr. High

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen visited Armstrong Junior High School in Starkville, MS, on Thursday, Nov. 14. They participated in a NAHM presentation as students learned about the Tribe, its history, current status, & culture. We appreciate Chief Ben & Princess Leilani for sharing information about the Tribe to expand students' knowledge.



Princess at ULM

Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen visited the campus of University of Louisiana-Monroe (ULM) on Sunday, Nov. 17, in celebration of Native American Heritage Month. Princess Leilani had the honor of attending a basketball game in which former Choctaw Central Lady Warrior Meloney Thames & the ULM Warhawks women's basketball team faced off against the University of Alabama Crimson Tide. She had 4 points as the Warhawks were defeated 75-52.



MSU hosts Global Night

Mississippi State University's (MSU) Global Night, hosted annually by the International Student Advisory Board (ISAB), is a distinguished event that brings together students, faculty, & staff to celebrate the diverse cultures, ideas, & perspectives within the MSU community. In honor of Native American Heritage Month, this year's event on Nov. 20th highlighted the rich traditions & contributions of Native American cultures, alongside performances & opportunities for meaningful connections. Among the attendees was 2024-2025 Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen, who joined in celebrating the vibrant global presence at Mississippi State. Global Night serves as a testament to the University's commitment to inclusivity, fostering an atmosphere of mutual understanding & global engagement.



Princess visits Keesler AFB

Reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen visited Keesler Air Force Base (AFB) in Biloxi, Miss., on Friday, Nov. 15, to participate in Native American Heritage Month (NAHM) presentations. In one presentation, she helped showcase the Tribe's rich cultural

heritage & answered questions about her selection as Princess & activities she has done during her reign. In the second presentation, she joined the Willis Family Social Dance Group as they performed several Choctaw social dances.



Princess visits during NAHM

As we come to the end of the month of November and conclusion of Native American Heritage Month (NAHM), we look back at several scenes from Princess Leilani's last NAHM visits. She gave presentations to the Forest Rotary Club, students at Madison Avenue Elementary School, University of Mississippi Medical Center students & staff (alongside Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben), & to students at Long Beach Middle School. Thank you to all of the schools & organizations that invited Princess Leilani, Tribal Chief Ben, & all other cultural presenters to share our Tribal history & culture with them!

ECCC hosts Native American Night

East Central Community College (ECCC) hosted a Native American Night at Bailey Stadium on Thursday evening, Oct. 24, as the Warriors faced off against the Copenh-Lincoln Wolves in football. Admission was free for MBCI Tribal Members as many attended & enjoyed the game. An MBCI/Pearl River Resort tailgate was held pregame as visitors enjoyed delicious food. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben was presented with a commemorative ECCC Warrior football helmet. Congratulations to the Warriors as they won 31-14 over the Wolves.



PRINCESS VISITS Despite a busy schedule, Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen has been enjoying visits to locations throughout the state and is proud to represent our Tribe & share our story with everyone she meets. She has participated in presentations to students at Perry Central Middle School & Madison Middle School, & to a Boy Scouts gathering in Hazlehurst. She also made appearances at ClarkeFest in Quitman, Bogue Homa community's American Indian Day celebration, & the City of Philadelphia's Ham Jam Arts Festival on Saturday, Oct. 13. She was introduced during the opening ceremonies,

along with other royalty from Neshoba County, & participated in Choctaw social dancing with the Natives Social Dance Group. She then visited several of the vendors & met with people & took photos.



Tribal band members perform

Congratulations to our Choctaw youth & East Central Community College (ECCC) Wall O' Sound Band members, as the band performed twice during the regional high school marching evaluation at Neshoba Central High School on Saturday, Oct. 13. Congratulations also to our Choctaw youth who are members of Neshoba Central's Big Blue Band who were participating in the evaluation. Congratulations to the band on their 45th consecutive superior rating! Keep up the good work, Wall O' Sound Band & Big Blue Band!



Willis crowned CCHS Homecoming Queen

Choctaw Central High School Senior Brylee Willis was crowned 2024 Homecoming Queen during halftime ceremonies of the Warriors/Leake County football game on Friday, Oct. 18 at Warrior Stadium in Choctaw. Pictured, from left to right, are Director of Schools Delnita Jones, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, crown bearer Kheita Cole Samuel, escort Brylas Willis, Homecoming Queen Willis, flower girl Armani Tubby, CCHS Principal Alaric Keams, & Assistant Director of Schools Trina Cheatham. The Warriors defeated the Gators 27-16.

Sophomore Maid Tubby in NCHS Homecoming

Neshoba Central High School held their 2024 Homecoming ceremony on Friday, Oct. 18. Amongst the members of the Homecoming Court was Choctaw youth & Sophomore Maid Callie Tubby. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben presented Callie with a beautiful bouquet of flowers. Congratulations on your honor & best wishes for a great rest of your school year!



Lyons serves as escort for ECCC Homecoming

Choctaw youth & East Central Community College (ECCC) Warrior Logan Lyons served as an escort on the 2024 ECCC Homecoming Court. The homecoming ceremony was held during halftime of the ECCC vs Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College football game on Thursday evening, Oct. 10. Great job & best wishes on a great year at ECCC!



Senior Maid Boyd in LCHS Homecoming

Leake Central High School hosted their 2024 Homecoming Ceremony on Friday, Sept. 13. One of the members of the Leake Central Homecoming Court was Senior Maid & Choctaw youth LaKristia Boyd. Family members, friends, & supporters were on hand to congratulate LaKristia on her honor. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen were also present to congratulate LaKristia, & Chief Ben presented her with a lovely bouquet of flowers. Congratulations & best wishes for more successes this senior year!



Wheeler signs with Itawamba

Tribal student-athlete & Union High School senior Alanee Wheeler signed a letter of intent to continue her academic & athletic career as a member of Itawamba Community College's Indians softball program in Fulton, MS. Wheeler was joined by family, friends, teammates, coaches, & supporters as they congratulated her & offered best wishes on her future endeavours.



Selected to WL Homecoming Courts

West Lauderdale Middle & High Schools hosted their Homecoming ceremonies on Friday evening, Oct. 4. Two Choctaw youth were among the participants as Cameron Lewis served as an 8th Grade Escort on the middle school Homecoming Court, & Courtney Lewis served as a Senior Maid on the high school Homecoming Court. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben joined family members, friends, & supporters to show support to these two outstanding individuals. Congratulations Cameron & Courtney for being selected to your respective courts, & best wishes for more success this school year!



Sockey signs with Holmes

Tribal student-athlete & Lake High School senior Alyssa Sockey signed a letter of intent to continue her academic & athletic career as a member of Holmes Community College's Bulldogs softball program in Goodman, MS. Sockey was joined by family, friends, teammates, coaches, & supporters as they offered congratulations & best of luck on her future endeavours.



Lewis signs with Jacksonville

Tribal student-athlete & West Lauderdale High School senior Courtney Lewis signed a letter of intent to continue her academic & athletic career as a member of Jacksonville University's Dolphins softball program in Jacksonville, FL. Lewis was joined by family, friends, teammates, coaches, & supporters as they congratulated her & offered best of luck on her future endeavours.



McQueen signs with South Alabama

Tribal student-athlete & Brandon High School senior Jay McQueen signed a letter of intent to continue his academic & athletic career as a member of the University of South Alabama's Jaguar baseball program in Mobile, AL. McQueen was joined by family, friends, teammates, coaches, & supporters as they congratulated him & offered him best of luck on his future endeavours.

Senior Nights 2024

CCHS hosts Senior Night

Choctaw Central High School (CCHS) hosted Senior Night activities for members of the football, band, & cheer teams on Thursday, Oct. 31, prior to the Warriors/Northeast Lauderdale Trojans football game. Seniors recognized included: (football) Kethan Anderson, Dominic Amos, Keyshawn Ben, Sanjaya Chickaway, Christian Davis, Blackcloud Frazier, Kaegan Henry, Isaiah Johnson, Ezra Triplett, Damien Wickson, Cruz Wilson, Izayah Wilson; (band) Damien Billie, Alyassa John, Taelan Martin; & (cheer) Karli Bell, Aiyana Frazier, Dayanara Lopez, & Railygh Perry. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen, school officials, coaches, & families were present to congratulate the seniors & present gifts. Congratulations, seniors, & best wishes for more success this senior year!



Newton County hosts Senior Night

Newton County High School held Senior Night activities on Friday, Nov. 1. Amongst the outstanding Cougar seniors recognized was Choctaw youth & cross country athlete Dasan King. Family members and his biggest supporters were present to congratulate him and present him with gifts. On Friday, Nov. 15, Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben visited Newton County High School to congratulate & present King a gift since he was unable to attend the Nov. 1 event. Congratulations again, Dasan, & continued best wishes for more success!



NCHS hosts Senior Night

On Thursday, Nov. 7, Neshoba Central High School hosted Senior Night activities for members of the Rockets football team. Amongst the seniors honored was Choctaw student-athlete Conner Stephens. Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben was on hand, along with Conner's family members & biggest supporters, to congratulate him & present him with a token of appreciation. Congratulations, Conner, & we wish you more success this senior year!



Tribal athletes compete in state playoffs

Several area teams participated in the 2024 MHSAA/MAIS playoffs for a chance to play for state championships in their respective sports this fall. We

would like to acknowledge the following Tribal student-athletes & their teams, & for post-season honors they may have earned.

VOLLEYBALL

Alyssa Sockey & the Lake Lady Hornets were runners-up in the Class 2A state championship game against Ingomar Lady Falcons on Thursday, Oct. 17, at Mississippi College in Clinton. The Lady Hornets fell in straight sets 3-0 & ended their season with a 20-10 record.

The Choctaw Central Lady Warriors made their second consecutive appearance in the Class 4A playoffs, but were defeated in the first round by Tishomingo County in straight sets 3-0 on Saturday, Oct. 5. They concluded their season with a 7-18 record. Lady Warriors receiving

post-season honors included Zaiya Bell, A'yaan Cotton, Cambee Johnson, & Marlena Fraire-Rains as they were named to Region 4-4A MS Coaches Volleyball All-State Academic Team.

Also in Class 4A, defending state champion Newton County Lady Cougars made it to the state semifinal round before being defeated by New Albany 3-1 on Monday, Oct. 14. They completed their season with a 32-5-1 record. Shae Jimmie was also named to the Region 4-4A MS Coaches Volleyball All-State Academic Team.

In Class 6A, the Neshoba Central Lady Rockets made it to the semifinal round before being defeated by Lake Cormorant in straight sets 3-0 on Monday, Oct. 14. They had a 24-7 record to conclude their season.

continued next page



From left to right, Lake Lady Hornet Alyssa Sockey, Newton County Lady Cougars Isabella Jefferson, Shae Jimmie, Felisia King, & Anayah Wesley.



Choctaw Central Lady Warriors Volleyball Team



Neshoba Central Lady Rockets Volleyball Team



Choctaw Central Golf Team members include (in no order) Laylee Wishork, Kallieya Thomas, Ajay Lewis, Dantzler Stephens, Zaymian Williamson, Kai Johnson, & Chance Briscoe.





Choctaw Central Warriors Football Team & Cheerleaders

GOLF

The Class 4A girls state tournament was held at The Bridges Golf Club in Bay St. Louis on Oct. 23-24. The Choctaw Central Lady Warriors placed 6th with a two-day total of 426. Sophomore Laylee Wishork ranked 5th with her overall score of 185 & 8th grader Kalieya Thomas ranked 24th with a score of 241.

The Class 4A boys tournament was held at River Birch Golf Club in Amory on Oct. 28-29. Choctaw Central Warriors placed 14th with a two-day total of 731. Senior Ajay Lewis ranked 15th with his overall score of 169, freshman Dantzler Stephens ranked 32nd with his score of 176, junior Zaymian Williamson ranked 45th with a score of 182, senior Chance Briscoe ranked 84th with a score of 204, & 7th grader Kai Johnson ranked 92nd with a score of 223.

FOOTBALL

In Class 1A, junior Ladanian King & the Taylorsville Tartars claimed the Region 7-1A title & a berth in the playoffs. They made it to the third round but were defeated by Velma Jackson 60-18 on Friday, Nov. 22. The Tartars finished the season with a 6-6 record.

The Choctaw Central Warriors went from winless in 2023 to starting off the 2024 season with four straight wins. During that run, they defeated the Cherokee Braves to retain the Battle of Nations trophy. During the regular season, the



From left, Ladanian King of Taylorsville; Neshoba Central Rockets (in no order) Zathian Ben, Koi Denson, CJ Farmer, Alandruck Hathorne, Jayden Kelly, Conner Stephens; & Joey Sockey of Leake Academy.

Warriors were undefeated at home & earned a berth in the Class 4A playoffs. They were defeated in the opening round 42-21 by Itawamba Agricultural High School. The Warriors concluded the season with a 6-4 record.

The Neshoba Central Rocket's season concluded in the

2nd round of the Class 6A playoffs with a loss to Grenada 31-7 on Friday, Nov. 22. The Rockets had a 6-6 record. Congratulations to All-Division 2-6A selections Koi Denson (2nd Team Offense), CJ Farmer & Conner Stephens (Honorable Mentions).

Sophomore Joey Sockey &

the Leake Academy Rebels concluded their season in the MAIS Class 5A championship game against Parklane Academy on Friday, Nov. 22. Parklane claimed the championship with a 70-42 win. Leake Academy ended the season with a 9-4 record & a District 2-5A championship.

Runners win cross country title, All-State honors

Several Tribal student-athletes came away with a state championship & All-State honors at the 2024 MHSAA's State Cross Country Championships at Mississippi College's Choctaw Trails in Clinton.

Championships were held on Thursday, Oct. 31, for Classes 1A-3A, & Saturday, Nov. 2 for Classes 4A-7A. The top 14 female, male runners in the 5000 meter course were named to the All-State team.

After finishing as runners-up in last year's Class 6A cham-

pionship, the Neshoba Central Rockets cross country team captured their first state championship on Saturday, Nov. 2, as they had four runners to earn All-State honors.

Rocket junior Evan Hallford finished 2nd overall with his time of 16:50:0.8. Rounding out the top 10 were Tribal runners: freshman Quinton Dan (6th) 17:32.01; junior Emjae Willis (7th) 17:45.84; & senior Isaiah Thomas (9th) 17:58.24.

Finishing in the top 25 were teammates: senior JonPaul

Moore (18th) 18:40.43; senior Shot Stribling (19th) 18:51.17; & sophomore Zayden Nowell (23rd) 19:13.73

Preceding the boys race, the Neshoba Central Lady Rockets finished 3rd overall in 6A as Tribal runner junior Kylie Truss placed 4th with a time of 22:07.36 & earned All-State honors. Other teammates placing included: 7th grader Milli Dear (19th) 24:05.67; senior Ellee McMillan (20th) 24:07.33; junior Lailah Henry (27th) 25:19.42; freshman Kayli Barahona (46th) 27:42.31, freshman Lacey Rogers (48th) 27:58.72; & junior Yazli Williams (54th)

see **RUNNERS**, pg. 26

RUNNERS continued from page twenty-five



Pictured are several members of Neshoba Central's cross country teams celebrating with the Class 6A boys state championship.



Pictured are members of Choctaw Central's cross country teams.

28:49.83.

In the Class 4A girls championship, the Choctaw Central Lady Warriors placed 4th overall & the Newton County Lady Cougars placed 8th.

Sophomore Zayna Hudson led the Lady Warriors as she placed 24th with a time of 23:44.80. She was followed by: junior Reannan Thomas (27th) 24:07.67; sophomore Tia John (31st) 24:22.73; freshman Roslyn Bohannon (33rd) 24:31.96; 7th grader Shaylee Alex (39th) 25:02.12, junior Caitlyn Bounds (42nd) 25:07.34; & sophomore Kailyn Perry (47th) 25:29.63.

Junior Dazlie Tubby led the Lady Cougars as she placed 45th with her time of 25:19.87, followed by: junior Shae Jimmie (49th) 25:19.87; & junior Laycey Wishork (60th) 26:41.95.

In the Class 4A boys championship, the Newton County Cougars came in 7th overall with the Choctaw Central Warriors placing 10th. For the Warriors, junior Zyan Hickman placed 4th with his time of 17:14.23 to earn All-State honors.

He was followed by: sophomore Deondre Clemmons (47th) 20:00.10; sophomore Anilee Shumake (77th) 21:15.19; 8th grader Ansen McMillan



Runners from the following schools included, from left to right, (Lake) Alyssa Sockeye, (Newton County) Laycey Wishork, Dazlie Tubby, Shae Jimmie, Kirklin Bell, & (Northeast Jones) Sonny Bohannon. Bohannon was scheduled to participate in the Class 4A championship, but was unable due to injury.

(91st) 21:41.36; & sophomore Cameron Rodriguez (112th) 22:46.15.

Sophomore Kirkland Bell placed 117th for the Cougars with his time of 22:55.21.

In the Class 2A girls championship on Thursday, Oct. 31, senior Alyssa Sockeye of the Lake Lady Hornets placed 33rd with her time of 27:32.4. Lake finished 9th overall.



Diamond Dreams

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, along with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and the Pearl River Resort, showed their passionate & continuing support to Diamond Dreams on Thursday evening, Oct. 17, 2024. Diamond Dreams is a baseball/softball league that was started in 2010, for special needs children of Neshoba & the surrounding counties. Mrs. TaRita Ben sang the National Anthem, & the reigning Choctaw Indian Princess Leilani Elyse Allen threw out the ceremonial first pitch to Chief Ben. Then the youth participants of

Diamond Dreams, cheered on by family members, friends, and supporters, played an exciting game. A fireworks show was held at the conclusion of the game, courtesy of Chief Ben. Pearl River Resort offered a delicious to-go meal to attendees. Thank you to Chief Ben, the Tribe & Pearl River Resort for your support of Diamond Dreams, & thank you to all organizers & volunteers of the Diamond Dreams league for their hard work & efforts to put smiles on children's faces!

DVAM Proclamation signed

Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben signed a proclamation on Tuesday, Oct. 1, 2024, declaring October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month (DVAM) on Choctaw Tribal lands. Staff members of the Family Violence & Victims Services Program & the MBCI Department of Family & Community Services were in attendance for the signing. Domestic violence is an on-going national problem, as well as in our community, & is the leading cause of injury to women over muggings, rape, & accidents combined. Domestic violence can be deadly since 1-in-3 women & 1-in-20 men will lose their lives to domestic violence homicide. Native American women are twice as likely to be abused, compared to women from other races or backgrounds, & we know children witness more domestic violence than they ever should. Law enforcement & first responders put themselves in harm's way each day to assist domestic violence victims & we, as citizens of our



communities, cannot continue to stand by & allow domestic violence to destroy our homes, futures, & the lives of our children. We must break our silence & speak out. If we see something, say something. **BREAK THE SILENCE & STOP THE VIOLENCE!**

Tribe awarded grant supporting victims of domestic violence, sexual assault

The U.S. Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW) awarded \$900,000 to the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, announced U.S. Attorney Todd W. Gee.

The grant was awarded through the OVW Tribal Governments Program, which provides funding to tribes to de-

velop and enhance effective governmental strategies to curtail violent crimes against and increase the safety of Indian women.

The funds will support the Family Violence and Victims Program, an agency of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians Tribal Government, which provides shelter and support services for Choctaw women who are victims of domestic vi-

olence or sexual assault.

“This DOJ grant will assist the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians with reducing domestic violence and other violent crime through collaboration with community organizations, tribal law enforcement, and prosecutors,” said U.S. Attorney Gee.

“The Family Violence and Victim Services program, a vital initiative within our Depart-

ment of Family and Community Services, plays a crucial role in supporting individuals during their most vulnerable moments,” said Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben. “This grant will enable us to sustain and enhance our efforts in the community. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Department of Justice for this generous award, which allows us to continue our important work.”

Additional information about the Office on Violence Against Women can be found at www.justice.gov/ovw.

FFVS hosts DVAM events

The Family Violence & Victims Services program hosted events during the month of October in observance of Domestic Violence Awareness Month. The events raised awareness about the impacts of domestic violence, acknowledged domestic violence survivors, & be a voice for the victims. On Tuesday, Oct. 8, a Healthy Family Fall Festival was held at the Choctaw Sportsplex for kindergarteners from the Choctaw Tribal Schools as representatives from various Tribal departments & programs provided fun-filled and informative activities, such as hayrides, face paintings, rabbit stick throw, bounce houses, demonstrations from the Choctaw Fire Department, & goodie bags. On Thursday, Oct. 17, a "Light Up the Night" Glow Run was held at the parking lot of Geyser Falls Water Theme Park in Choctaw. It was also Wear Purple Day as it highlights commemorating those whose lives were lost, celebrating the survivors' resilience, & helping form connections to put an end to domestic violence.





TRUMAN HOUSTON LEWIS, JR.

Funeral services for Truman Houston Lewis, Jr., 41, was held on Monday, October 7, 2024, at the Standing Pine Community Gymnasium. Deacon Ricky Edwards & Bro. Carl Wilson officiated.



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

Mr. Lewis passed away on Oct. 3 at his residence.

He was a Baptist by faith & served as a detention officer, Tribal Security, & security officer for Standing Pine Elementary School. He enjoyed being with family, attending school functions, sporting events & family gatherings, fixing cars,

playing volleyball, stickball, football, basketball, & fishing. He was a Houston Texans fan.

He is preceded in death by his grandparents, Lynch & Nervie Lewis Bell, Houston & Edna Sam Lewis; & mother, Marian Bell Lewis.

Survivors include his wife, Melinda Stoliby Lewis; father, Truman Houston Lewis, Sr.; daughters, Destine Lewis, Melanie Lewis, & Summer Lewis; sons, Deon Lewis, Truman Lewis III, Hunter Lewis, & Zander Lewis; sister, George Ann Lewis; brother, Joseph Houston Lewis; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

INFANT COLSON LEE GOMEZ

Funeral services for infant Colson Lee Gomez was held on Friday, October 11, 2024, at the Pearl River CERF Building. Pastor Thomas Ben officiated.

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

Infant Gomez was born & passed away on Oct. 6 at Anderson Baptist Hospital in Meridian.

He is preceded in death by his grandmother, Priscilla Clemmons; grandfather, Elias Gomez; & a sibling, Baby Cotton.

He leaves in God's care his parents, Nikiya Cotton & Maximillian Gomez; sisters, Kaiya Cotton, Mallee Willis, Colie Willis, & Cayzrea Stoliby; brothers, Kahxylon Gomez, Xavery Gomez, Quentin Gomez, Oakley Willis, Kane Willis, & Owen Willis; grandfather, Kevin Cotton; grandmother, Roberta L. Tubby; & a host of relatives.

EFFIE LYNN BELL

Funeral services for Effie Lynn Bell, 73, was held on Wednesday, October 16,



2024, at the Bogue Chitto Baptist Church. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

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

Ms. Bell passed away on Oct. 11 at Anderson Baptist Hospital in Meridian.

She resided in Bogue Chitto community & graduated from



CFD Captain Lewis retires

A retirement reception was held for Choctaw Fire Department Captain Winfred Lewis on Tuesday, October 29, 2024. Capt. Lewis has served the fire department & the Tribe faithfully for 25 years. As he was surrounded by colleagues, friends, & family, Capt. Lewis was honored as several guests recollected of his tireless service & excep-

tional attributes. On behalf of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben, Rick Alex, Division Director of Tribal Member Services, gifted Capt. Lewis a pair of beaded stickball sticks & a plaque in appreciation of his service. Thank you for your outstanding service, & best wishes for a wonderful retirement!

continued next page

Choctaw Central. She worked with Choctaw Tribal Schools for 45 years & enjoyed beading, chanting, & teaching students the Choctaw language.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Jimmy Bell, Sr.; parents, Ellis Thompson, Sr. & Lena Mae Morris Thompson; sisters, Suzanne Stoliby, Nora Dean Frazier, & Diane Joe Billie; brothers, Slick Thompson, Stanley Thompson, Pat Thompson, & Ralph Thompson; & a grandson, Justin Michael Aguilar.

Survivors include her daughters, Melanie Huerta Silva & Amanda Lynn Cornell; sister, Darlene Thompson; 7 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren, & a host of relatives & friends.

JANET RENEE HENRY FRAZIER

Funeral services for Janet Renee Henry Frazier, 48, was held on Saturday, October 19, 2024, at the Tucker CERF Building. Bro. Marco Patrick & Rev. Mark Patrick officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.



Mrs. Frazier passed away on Oct. 11 at Oschner Hospital in New Orleans, LA.

Raised in Tucker community, she attended Neshoba Central. She was a cook at Dancing Rabbit Club House & enjoyed cooking for her family, being with family & friends, texting, & being on social media.

She is preceded in death by her parents, Grady & Caroline Henry; brothers, Charles Henry, Franklin Henry, Hanson Henry, & Milton Henry, Sr.; & nephews, Brandon Henry & Brent Henry.

Survivors include her husband, Dave Frazier; daughters, Valentay Willis & Reanna

Willis; step-daughter, Kaylee Frazier; sons, Ziahay Willis & DeonTrae Joe; brother, Bryant Henry, Sr.; & a host of relatives & friends.

MARGARET ELLEN JEFFERSON

Funeral services for Margaret Ellen Jefferson, 66, was held on Wednesday, October 23, 2024, at the Bogue Homa Baptist Church. Deacon Ricky Edwards, Sr. & Bro. Curtis Gibson officiated.



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

Ms. Jefferson passed away on Oct. 17 at South Central Regional Medical Center in Laurel.

She attended Bogue Homa Baptist Church & enjoyed going to the casino, watching westerns, being with her grandkids, & being a Green Bay Packers fan.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Randy Lee Jefferson; parents, Newman Thomas & Corine Jim Billy; son, Richard Mason Jefferson; sisters, Diane Ben & Rhonnell Henderson; brothers, Carmen Thomas, Clarence Thomas, & Una Cotton; & a step-mother, Mazola Thomas.

Survivors include her daughter, Randi Jefferson; sons,

Bruce Jefferson, Jason Jefferson, Jeffery Jefferson, Hunter Jefferson, & Ryder Jefferson; sisters, Ailene Thomas, Mary Jim, Mona Pitts, Brenda Vaughn, & Roberta Smith; brother, Chris Thomas; 14 grandchildren; 4 great-grandchildren; special niece, Brandi Alex; & a host of relatives & friends.

TIMOTHY MARTIN STEVE

Funeral services for Timothy Martin Steve, 71, was held on Friday, October 25, 2024, at Hope Indian Baptist Church in Pearl River. Deacon Williamson Isaac & Rev. Mark Patrick officiated.



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

Mr. Steve passed away on Oct. 21 at his residence.

A 1973 graduate of Choctaw Central, he attended Haskell Indian Junior College in Lawrence, KS, & earned a certificate in painting & decorating. He worked at Choctaw Health Center, Choctaw Police De-

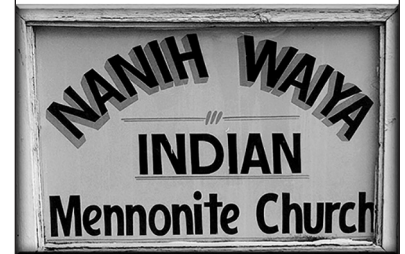
partment, then Choctaw Employment Assistance Program as a Job Coach/Counselor until his retirement.

Timothy & his wife, Carolyn, were married for 42 years & helped raise two boys, Kaiser Cotton & Colton Wilson. He had a great sense of humor, jovial laughter, was well-liked, enjoyed being with his wife, family, & pets (dog named Potty & a cat), traveling, playing stickball during his youth, collecting Choctaw beadwork, coins, & Elvis Presley keepsakes.

He is preceded in death by his parents, John Bobo Steve & Roslie Wilson Steve; sisters, Loretta Steve Wilson, Margaret Clouch, Audie Day, Vivian Tubby, Sally Canku, Laura

see OBITUARIES, pg. 30

Welcome To



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

Come Join Us...



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

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

Pastor Thomas Ben

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

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

OBITUARIES continued from page twenty-nine

Brennan; brothers, John Fitzgerald Steve, Maurice Steve, Carl Steve, & Peter John Steve.

Survivors include his wife, Carolyn Wilson Steve; sisters, Norma Steve Hickman, Kathy Steve, & Margie Steve Journeycake; brother, Joseph Steve; grandsons, Colton Wilson & Kaiser Cotton; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

INFANT EVERSYN NYDELL CHARLIE

Funeral services for Eversyn Nydell Charlie, 13 days old, was held on Saturday, October 26, 2024, at the Tucker Community Gymnasium. Pastor Eddie Johnson officiated.

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

Infant Charlie passed away on Oct. 22 at University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson.

He is preceded in death by his sister, Kyzleigh Brielle Charlie; grandparents, Bruce Jackson & Cynthia Bell; & great-grandparents, Coburn Charlie, Sr. & Gloria Davis Charlie.

Survivors include his parents, Jaiden Jackson & Devin Charlie; brother, Kaizden Charlie; grandparents, Rahka Brescia & Coburn Charlie, Sr.; great-grandmother, Janis Jimmie; 7 aunts, 2 uncles, & a host of relatives.

SELMA DENSON

Funeral services for Selma Denson, 80, was held on Sunday, October 27, 2024, at the Standing Pine Community Gymnasium. Pastor Henderson



Williams & Pastor Olin Williams officiated.

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

Ms. Denson passed away on Oct. 23 at St. Dominic's Hospital in Jackson.

A resident of Standing Pine community, she was a teacher's aide at Pearl River & Standing Pine Elementary Schools. She transferred to Choctaw Residential Center's dietary program, then Choctaw Health Center's dietary program where she worked 31 years until her retirement in 2023. She enjoyed watching TV shows & cooking.

She is preceded in death by her father, Philmon Williams; mother, Sarah H. Williams; son, Ronnie Williams; foster sons, Matthew Allen & Stephen Allen; an uncle, Carter Williams; aunts, Mary Ann Denson & Laline Farve; half-brothers, Henry Williams, Darry Williams, Sammy Williams, Dennis Williams, Jonas Williams, Wayne Williams, & Bradley Williams; half-sisters, Emma Willis, Annie Bell, & Joanna Williams; & granddaughter, Kelly Leigh-Ann Williams.

Survivors include her daughter, Marion Faye Denson; sons, Jonathon Glenn Denson & Eric Denson; foster son, Michael Allen; brothers, Henderson Williams & Olin Williams; half-sisters, Ruby Williams, Fannie Willis, Rosemary Williams, & Wanda Willis; 3 grandchildren; 8 great-grandchildren; 7 foster grandchildren; & a host of half nieces & nephews, relatives, & friends.

FRANCES COTTON

Funeral services for Frances Cotton, 67, was held on Friday, November 1, 2024, at Pine Bluff Baptist Church in Sebastopol. Deacon Marco Patrick & Pastor Robert Patrick officiated.



Burial was in Pine Bluff Church Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Ms. Cotton passed away on Oct. 29 at Leake Baptist Hospital in Carthage.

She attended Nanih Waiya Mennonite Church & enjoyed gardening, fishing, sewing, & playing games on her tablet. She was a guest room attendant at Pearl River Resort for several years.

She is preceded in death by her father, Tubby Cotton; sister, Barbara Ann Cotton; brothers, Bee Cotton, Barney Cotton, Kurtiss Cotton, & Glen Cotton; a granddaughter, Alexandria Rose Mingo; & grandparents, Gus Willis & Lizzie Cotton, John & Fannie Frazier Cotton.

Survivors include her mother, Marie Willis Cotton; daughters, Tracie Gibson & Connie Cotton; brother, Danny Cotton, Sr.; special companion, Harry Wickson; 8 grandchildren; 3 great-grandchildren; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

WELFORD WILLIAMS

Funeral services for Welford Williams, 76, was held on Sunday, November 3, 2024, at his residence in Cone-



hatta. Deacon Billy G. Smith officiated.

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

Mr. Williams passed away on Oct. 29 at his residence.

He attended St. Catherine Catholic Church & enjoyed long walks, playing cards & dominos, fishing, & playing guitar, having worship services at his house, being with family, & being a fan of Koni Hata Stickball teams.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Coy & Leona Shoemaker Williams; sisters, Sira M. Willis & Irene W. King; brothers, Alvin Williams, Raymond "Oshi" Williams, & Steve Williams.

Survivors include his sister, Laurene Chapman; brother, Bobby Williams, Sr.; aunt, Juanita Shoemaker; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

LEWANA NELL OTTER

Funeral services for Lewana Nell Otter, 52, was held on Monday, November 18, 2024, at Hope Indian Baptist Church in Pearl River. Deacon Williamson Isaac, Bryan Chekelelee & Jason Martin officiated.



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

Ms. Otter passed away on Nov. 9 at her residence.

She enjoyed being with others, playing games on her phone, telling stories, being on

continued next page

Facebook, & being with her brothers, Brandon Earl Martin, Bryan Scott Chekelelee & Jason Littlejohn.

Survivors include her son, Kristopher Otter; daughter, Ariel Henry; grandchildren, Kaliah LaRain Isom & Everson Shay Henry; mother, Nelda Lewis; special cousin, Sandra Isaac; & a host of family & friends.

CARLTON RAY FRAZIER

Funeral services for Carlton Ray Frazier, 37, was held on Thursday, November



21, 2024, at the Bogue Chitto CERF Building. Deacon Kendall Wallace & Rev. Charles Doby Henry officiated.

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

Mr. Frazier passed away on Nov. 15 at his residence.

He resided in Bogue Chitto community & was a member of Nanih Waiya Stickball team. He enjoyed playing basketball, working outdoors, making stickball sticks, & fishing.

He is preceded in death by his father, Raymond Frazier; grandparents, Gaston & Bessie Frazier, Walter & Bessie Morris; & a host of aunts, uncles, & a nephew.

Survivors include his companion, Sharon Wallace; mother, Mary Lou Morris; daughters, Delanie Wallace, Caramillo Frazier, Cassius Wallace, Carisa Wallace, & Sunni Wallace; a son, Conner Frazier; sisters, Shannon Wilson, Belinda Morris, Rachel Morris, & Antonia Jim; brothers, Dustin Morris, Raymond Randolph Frazier, & Joshua Frazier; & a host of relatives & friends.

EMMA LEWIS WILLIS

Funeral services for Emma Lewis Willis, 80, was held on Friday, November 22,



2024, at the residence of Ralph Sam in Red Water. Rev. Carl Wilson officiated.

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

Ms. Willis passed away on Nov. 16 at the Choctaw Residential Center in Choctaw.

She lived in Red Water community & enjoyed being with family & friends, & listening to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio.

She is preceded in death by her husband, Chester Willis; parents, Lee & Edna Wilson Lewis; sisters, Lillian Lewis Sam, Wilma Lewis, Christine Thomas, & Jeannette Willis; brothers, Eddie Lewis & Alex Willis; & a grandson, Andy Lewis.

Survivors include her daughter, Mary Butler; son, Winfred Lewis; sister, Eleanor Torralba; 6 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren, & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

RAMSEY WAYLON KING

Funeral services for Ramsey Waylon King, 54, was held on Sunday, November 24,



2024, at the Conehatta CERF Building. Bro. Shelly Peoples officiated. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. King passed away on Nov. 18 at Rush Medical Center in Meridian.

He lived in Conehatta community & was a basketweaver. He enjoyed doing demonstrations, hunting, fishing, & drumming. He was MVP of the 1990 World Series Stickball with the Conehatta Stickball team. He graduated from East Central Community College with a certificate & degree in automotive technology.

He is preceded in death by his father, Adair King; daughter, Megan Shoemake; & sister, Lucretia King.

Survivors include his wife, Twana Polk King; mother, Emma Thompson King; daughters, Brandi King, Lynnita Murray, Kalseia King, Emily Shoemake Coleman, Tehya King, Sahmeya King, & Aliyah King; son, Ramsey King II; stepdaughters, Tymara Frazier & Kelsea Polk; stepsons, Damion Polk & Danian Polk; brothers, Elray King & Rodrick McMillan; aunts, Angeline King, Lacie Bell, Juanita Gardinski, & Marcia Thompson; uncles, Billy Thompson & Vernon King; & a host of nieces, nephews, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, relatives, & friends.

JIMMY CARL BILLIE

Funeral services for Jimmy Carl Billie, 63, was held on Wednesday, December 4,



2024, at the Red Water CERF Building. Rev. Tim Tubby officiated.

Burial was in John Memorial Methodist Church Cemetery. John E. Stephens Chapel Funeral Services was in charge of arrangements.

Mr. Billie passed away on Nov. 29 at Baptist Leake Hospital in Carthage.

A graduate of Choctaw Central High School, he was a U.S. Army Veteran & lived in the

Red Water community. He was a wood worker & made mailboxes, tables, chairs, & other objects for family & friends. He enjoyed playing the guitar, listening to country music, going to concerts, & being with his dogs. Prior to his retirement, he was a kitchen worker at Red Water Elementary School.

He is preceded in death by his parents, John Billie & Lisette John; sisters, Sara Tsosie & Martha Billy; & brother, Bobby Billie.

Survivors include his sisters, Diane Thomas (Loy), Betty Ross, & Helen Moore; brother, Johnny Billie; & a host of nieces, nephews, relatives, & friends.

WILLIAM COREY JEFFERSON

Funeral services for William Corey Jefferson, 49, was held on Thursday, December 5,



2024, at Hope Indian Baptist Church in Pearl River. Deacon Williamson Isaac & Rev. Ricky Thompson, Sr. officiated.

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

Mr. Jefferson passed away on Nov. 30 in Philadelphia.

He enjoyed being with family & friends, watching football, fishing, & listening to 80's music.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Eugene Jefferson & Alma Lee Tubby Bell; grandparents, Mary Willis Tubby & George Tubby; & an infant Jefferson.

Survivors include his brother, Clifton Jefferson; niece, Raenise Jefferson; nephews, De'Aiden & Eugene Jefferson; uncle, Presley Tubby; & a host of relatives & friends.



Halloween Fun at 2024 Community Trunk or Treats

Trick-or-treaters came out for an evening of fun & goodies during the 2024 Community Trunk or Treat events in the Tribal communities on Tuesday, Oct. 22. Henning, TN held their event on Friday, Oct. 25, & Bogue Homa community rescheduled their event to Tuesday, Oct. 29. Other trunk or treat events were held at the Choctaw Town Center, Chahta Immi Cultural Center, & Transit/Risk Management offices on Monday, Oct. 28. The MBCI Department of Public Safety hosted their Trunk or Treat event on Wednesday, Oct. 30. The events included participation from the Office of Tribal Chief Cyrus Ben & the Tribal Administration, Choctaw Tribal Council Representatives, programs, organizations, clubs, & families as they enjoyed distributing goodies to all the trick-or-treaters dressed in their favorite costumes.



CHOCTAW COMMUNITY NEWS

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2024

© 2024 MISSISSIPPI BAND OF CHOCTAW INDIANS

