



CHOCTAW NATION OF OKLAHOMA YEAR IN REVIEW

..... 2023





VISION

LIVING OUT THE CHAHTA SPIRIT OF FAITH, FAMILY AND CULTURE.



MISSION

TO THE CHOCTAW PROUD, OURS IS THE SOVEREIGN NATION
OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY.



The Great Seal of the Choctaw Nation was formalized in 1857. The pipe within the seal is traditionally understood as a representation of community alliances. Rising tobacco smoke from the pipe can symbolize prayer connections, and the unstrung bow is a symbol of the Choctaw people's love of peace but willingness to go to war if attacked. The three arrows honor Choctaw Chiefs Pushmataha, Moshulatubbee and Apuckshunnubbee.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome and Reservation	4	Sovereignty	16
Programs and Services	6	Constitution Anniversary and Pledge	17
Housing	7	Law Enforcement	19
Education and Childcare	8	Indian Child Welfare	20
Health	9	Hunting/Fishing/Compact Info	21
Veterans and Outreach	11	Major Projects	22
Arts and Culture	12	Financial Info	23
Language Updates	13	Commerce and Infrastructure	24
Cultural Center Updates	14	Recruitment	25
Artist Registry	15	Strategic Objectives	26



Gary Batton
Chief



Jack Austin, Jr.
Assistant Chief

TRIBAL COUNCIL



Thomas Williston
District 1



Tony Ward
District 2



Eddie Bohanan
District 3



Jess Henry
District 4



Ronald Perry
District 5



Jennifer Woods
District 6



Joey Tom
District 7



Perry Thompson
District 8



James Dry
District 9



Anthony Dillard
District 10



Robert Karr
District 11



James Frazier
District 12

HALITO

EMPOWERMENT. SOVEREIGNTY.

These two words are the foundation of everything the Choctaw Nation strives to help its tribal members achieve. The programs, clinics, food and clothing drives, counsel, innovations, and education are all components to help our tribal members achieve self-empowerment and keep our nation sovereign. Our efforts are founded on the promise that our people will have better lives going forward as strong, independent, and self-sustaining tribal members. Our efforts are also to ensure that our tribe remains a strong sovereign nation.

In 2023, we have faced some difficulties and have achieved great milestones as a tribe. We endured whatever the past year held for us as a unified, strong, and resilient tribe. Our tribal council made tough decisions this past year, but through their strong leadership we came out better for their efforts.

I could not be prouder of the efforts of our tribe, our associates and all who contributed to a successful year for the Choctaw Nation. This book will highlight examples of what we have accomplished as a nation in the past fiscal year, that runs from Oct. 1, 2022 to Sept. 30, 2023. I believe that you will find that this past year has seen a lot of expansion and nation stewardship that will help guide the fortunes of the nation in 2024. This report is also about the Choctaw people, their resilience and the Chahta pride that runs through this nation like a strong, flowing river. Our people are proud, strong and the sole reason for the Choctaw Nation's success. Without the concerted efforts of our tribal members, tribal council, associates, leadership and proud Chahta everywhere the Choctaw Nation would not see the successes, growth, and achievements of the past year.

I am a proud Chahta, and I am grateful to serve the Choctaw Nation. Our continued focus on success, growth, sovereignty, and self-empowerment will make this nation stronger for generations to come. We have some exciting programs and expansions in the coming year and yakoke for being a part of it. We have the strength to navigate anything that comes our way if we remain a sovereign, self-sustaining tribe.

YAKOKE AND GOD BLESS,



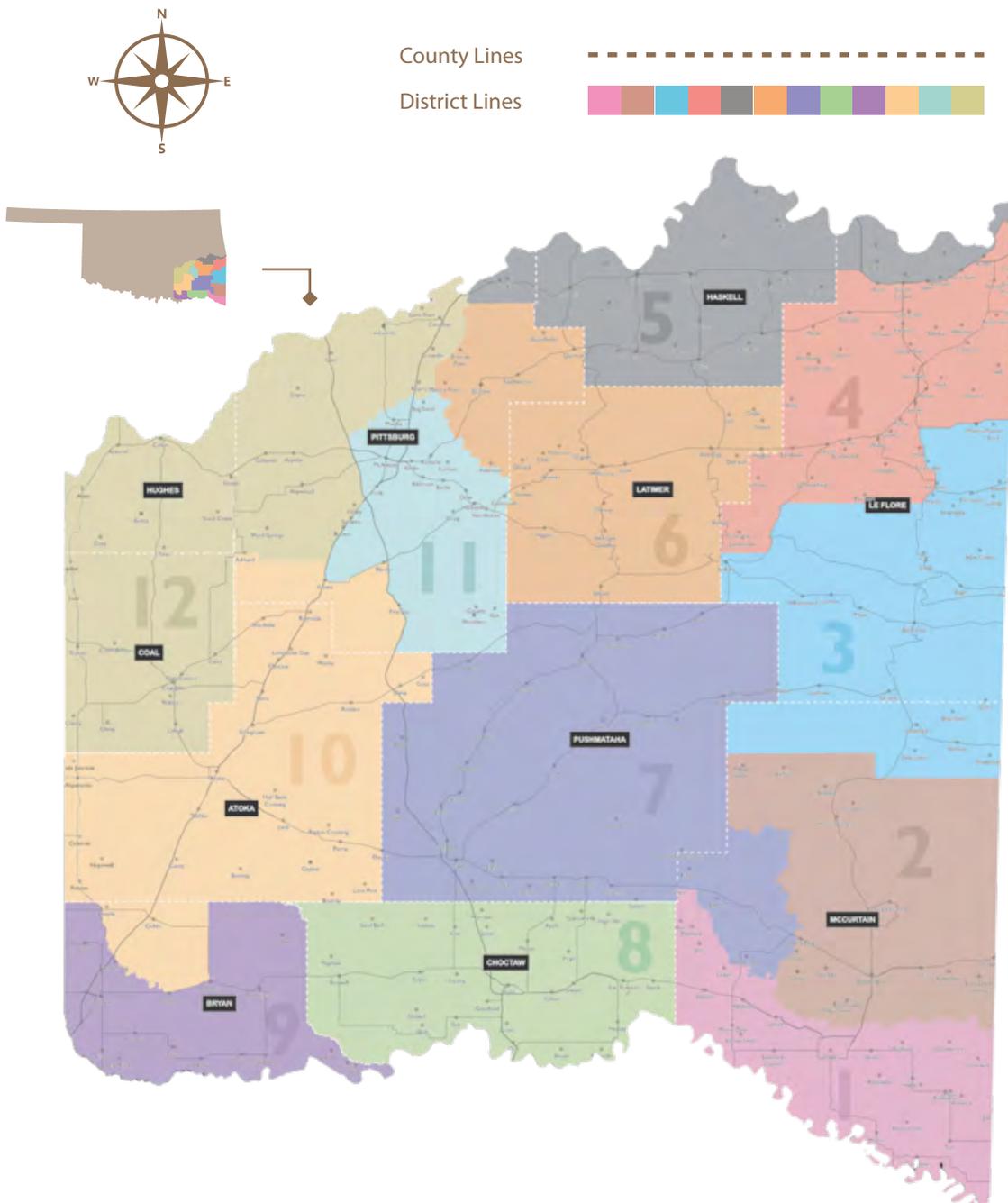
Chief Gary Batton
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



RESERVATION AND DEMOGRAPHICS

THE CHOCTAW NATION IS THE THIRD-LARGEST INDIAN NATION IN THE UNITED STATES, WITH **OVER 225,000 TRIBAL MEMBERS AND 12,000-PLUS ASSOCIATES.**

The first tribe over the Trail of Tears, historic boundaries are in the southeast corner of Oklahoma. The Choctaw Nation's vision, "Living out the Chahta Spirit of faith, family and culture," is evident as it continues to focus on providing opportunities for growth and prosperity.



SERVING OUR PEOPLE AND OUR COMMUNITIES



CHAHTA SPIRIT IN ACTION: “COWBOY” BILL PARKER

William Parker, called Cowboy Bill since birth, grew up on horseback, working cattle and riding in rodeos near his home in Shady Point, Oklahoma. Years later, his rough-and-tumble upbringing would come in handy as a member of the U.S. Army’s Company E, 2nd Battalion of the 116th Regimental Combat Team of the 29th Infantry Division. He joined the army just in time for the Allied invasion of France. Parker’s unit landed as the first wave at Omaha Beach in Normandy, France on June 6, 1944. At 20 years old, Parker was the leader of the wire cutting team and was the first man off his landing craft. Under heavy fire from German soldiers, Parker’s team made their way to their assignment and blew the wire as instructed, but they became pinned under a pillbox near the beach where they endured shelling from U.S. Navy ships. The 116th had the highest number of casualties of any unit on D-Day, but Bill Parker survived and led other soldiers to safety. He was promoted to Staff Sergeant in the field and served the rest of the war through V-E Day on May 8, 1945.

Parker lost most of his hearing in the navy shelling at Omaha Beach, and he was twice wounded in the war, but living for almost 80 years with the carnage he witnessed was the hardest part. For decades, Parker suffered from terrible nightmares until he returned to Normandy in his mid-nineties. Seeing the families and children enjoying themselves at the beach in peace helped cure him of those nightmares. While in France, several people approached Parker to thank him for his part in liberating their country during the war. At age 96, Parker was awarded the French Legion of Honor, France’s highest honor. On receiving the medal, Parker said, “I never expected any of this for me, but I think it needs to be told, and I’m just glad it happened.” “Cowboy” Bill Parker, a true Chahta tvshka, passed away September 11,

2023, at age 98, leaving behind a legacy of heroism, patriotism, and most of all, kindness.

HOUSING

The Choctaw Nation Housing Authority helps ensure that our tribal members have safe, affordable homes. Sometimes, families need home repairs or rehabilitation services. Others may need to find an affordable rental unit or assistance with a Lease-to-Purchase (LEAP) home. Whatever the need, the Choctaw Nation has resources available to support tribal members, their families, and their communities.

One of our most important housing initiatives is the ongoing construction of LEAP homes, Affordable Rental units, and Independent Elder homes across the reservation. This year, we got even closer to our goal of having 600 housing units by the end of the 2024 fiscal year. The latest CNO housing projects are three new multi-family units that will be available to Choctaw Nation associates and tribal members. With these apartment complexes, the Nation hopes to help combat the rising cost of rent in the area and the shortage of market-rate housing.

TRIBAL HOUSEHOLDS SERVED		8,358
INDEPENDENT ELDER HOMES COMPLETED		8
AFFORDABLE RENTAL UNITS COMPLETED		55
LEAP HOMES COMPLETED		90
STORM SHELTERS INSTALLED		562
TOTAL HOME REPAIRS		2,667



From “Chukka: The Traditional Choctaw House”
Iti Fabvssa, April 2011

The traditional house is known as “chukka” in the Choctaw language. Our ancestors conceived and designed the chukka to transform common local raw materials into comfortable and strong buildings that met their basic needs of shelter, protection, and storage. Like today, these houses served as the physical setting of family life, a comfortable place to visit with friends, to share meals, and to sit back and relax from a day’s work and stress. The specific forms of traditional Choctaw houses have changed through time to meet changing needs and tastes.

According to James Adair, the construction of winter houses usually began when a chill could be felt in the fall air. House-building was a well-organized activity, in which community members came together to raise a family’s dwelling. The work could be completed in just one day. After the framework was complete, the entire structure was daubed with clay mixed with dry grass. This served as an insulation, similar to adobe of the southwest. When the daubing was half-way dry, the roof was thatched with dry grass.

Read more Iti Fabvssa articles at biskinik.com



EDUCATION

One of the most important pillars of a successful life is education. From the youngest tribal members to our elders and their communities, the Choctaw Nation has programs in place to encourage a love for learning throughout our whole lives because a curious and active mind can accomplish anything. Choctaw Nation Child Care Centers are licensed through the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and employ highly qualified and certified teachers. This program supports children through each developmental stage by giving them the freedom to learn, create and play while learning practical and social skills.

Each person's educational journey is unique, but no matter the circumstances, the Choctaw Nation is here to help. Tribal members attending K-12 schools and colleges are eligible through attendance and grade incentives, clothing and technology allowances, and a wide range of higher education programs. For those who are looking to complete their high school equivalency or get career training, we have services designed to help with all facets of adult education.



8 CHILD CARE CENTERS SERVING 722 CHILDREN

CHAHTA FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

167 STUDENTS AWARDED
\$458,300 IN AWARDS FUNDED

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

7,643 STUDENTS AWARDED
\$8,178,975 IN AWARDS FUNDED

HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

12,305 APPROVED APPLICATIONS

\$12,575,904 IN APPROVED FUNDING

HEALTHCARE: MEDICAL

One of the top priorities for the Choctaw Nation is to ensure the health of Native Americans within the reservation boundaries. The Choctaw Nation Health Services Authority (CNHSA) serves the American Indian/Alaskan Native population through its hospital in Tali hina and eight outlying clinics. CNHSA's philosophy is to provide quality medical care by prioritizing communication, teamwork and preservation of the dignity, cultural values and health of each patient.

CNHSA also provides pharmaceutical care to eligible patients at all nine of the medical facilities in the reservation. Pharmacy services are available to any Native American or Alaskan Native in the U.S. who uses CNHSA.



TOTAL PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED
(ALL CNHSA PHARMACIES)

1,636,581



HEALTH ENCOUNTERS
(INCLUDES BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ENCOUNTERS)

1,072,485



13 WELLNESS CENTERS SAW
453,234 VISITS



From "The Choctaw Sweat Lodge"

Iti Fabvssa, September 2011

The sweat lodge has been a part of Choctaw traditional culture for a very long time. Archaeologists working at the Bellefonte site in northeastern Alabama, not too far from Choctaw County, uncovered the remains of a sweat lodge that dates back almost 1,000 years (Futato 1977). In all likelihood, the use of sweat lodges in the region dates back quite a bit earlier than that.

From oral history and written descriptions, we know that Choctaws in the past conducted sweats for several specific reasons. It was common for fatigued hunters and warriors, upon returning home, to do a sweat in order to relax their bodies and regain their strength. Choctaw doctors also used sweats to relieve patients with colds and a wide variety of aches and pains. Today, as in the past, many Choctaws participate in the sweat lodge for the perceived health and spiritual benefits that they derive from it. An ancient but developing practice, it connects Choctaws with our ancestors as well as the other tribes around us.

Read more Iti Fabvssa articles at biskinik.com



HEALTHCARE: BEHAVIORAL

Recent studies have shown that American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) face disproportionate rates of mental and behavioral health disorders, including suicide, violence, and behavior-related morbidity and mortality. In fact, AI/AN people report serious psychological distress at least 2.5 times more often than the general population in any given month.

The Choctaw Nation's Integrated Behavioral Health Care program seeks to reach Native Americans living within the reservation boundaries who might be struggling with any number of behavioral health issues, from a fear of needles or trouble swallowing pills to depression and anxiety.

Integrated health therapists are housed in the medical clinic, which offers the advantages of a more holistic approach to physical, emotional and mental health, as well as removing any stigma associated with seeking behavioral health treatment. These therapists collaborate with health providers to ensure patients are getting the treatment they need and help identify non-medical risk factors that may prevent patients from getting proper care.

CNHSAs' BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS HELP ADULTS, ADOLESCENTS AND CHILDREN THROUGH THE FOLLOWING SERVICES:

- Individual Counseling
- Family Counseling
- Case Management Services
- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Child/Partner Abuse Counseling
- Psychiatric Medication
(Evaluation/Management)
- Crisis Intervention
- Suicide Prevention



BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ENCOUNTERS
30,305

If you or a loved one is experiencing a mental health crisis, call or text the 988 Mental Health Lifeline. This resource helps individuals who are feeling depressed, anxious, overwhelmed, suicidal, or are struggling with a substance use issue.

VETERAN ADVOCACY AND OUTREACH

The mission statement of the Choctaw Nation's Veteran Advocacy program is "To assure that Choctaw veterans receive benefits and services on par with other veterans; see that they encounter no barriers or impediments in their attempts to access these services; and are treated with respect and dignity by VA service providers. The Veteran Advocacy program will serve Choctaw veterans by assisting with eligibility and entitlements of veterans and their dependents. The Veteran Advocate will assist with contacting the appropriate VA service provider in their area."

This year, the Choctaw Nation launched Warrior Wellness, a grant-funded program designed to connect Native American veterans with their culture, heritage and each other to reduce rates of death by suicide among veterans. Although there have been alarming suicide rates among veterans, the data points to a declining trend that has continued since 2006, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The decline in deaths points to how treatment programs geared toward veterans and their families can help those in need. Thanks to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs SSG Parker Fox Suicide Prevention Program, the Choctaw Nation can offer more help to veterans in need.

For more information on Veterans Advocacy or our Warrior Wellness program, please visit choctawnation.com/services/veteran-advocacy/



ASSISTED WITH
455 CLAIMS



AWARDED 1,353
CHAHTA VETERAN JACKETS



The Choctaw Code Talkers

It has been over 100 years since 19 Choctaw soldiers first used their native language to impact the outcome of World War I. These young men put their lives on the line for a country that didn't even grant them citizenship until three years after the war ended. With the Germans tapping the U.S. army's phone lines, it was very difficult to keep the location of Allied Forces and their supplies hidden, but when an officer overheard Choctaw men conversing in their native language on a battlefield in France, he immediately had the idea to use the language as code to confuse and confound the enemy's espionage efforts. This helped give Allied Forces the security they needed to win the war in 1921.

In November 2023, a delegation from the Choctaw Nation traveled to France to commemorate the 105th anniversary of the WWI battle that liberated St. Etienne. Chief Batton laid a wreath at the base of the Blanc Mont monument to honor the contributions of Choctaw code talkers and other Choctaw soldiers who gave their lives.

Read more Iti Fabvssa articles at biskinik.com

CONNECTING WITH CULTURE



CHAHTA SPIRIT IN ACTION: BOBBY VON MARTIN

Award-winning artist Bobby Von Martin has a passion for inspiring youth and adults through his paintings and his volunteer work in communities. Martin donates his time to local youth art classes and to local Native and non-Native activities for fundraisers and local events. His work is known worldwide, and he owns and curates the Honor Your Elders Art Exhibit, one of California’s largest Native American art exhibits, in his hometown of Fresno.

Martin started working with local Native American youth by teaching art classes and giving them a positive tool through art. For every painting Martin sells, he gifts one to the community to keep the circle moving and put out positive energy. He has painted over 100 paintings and gifted them to elders or their families. “I hope our youth see what I’m doing, see how I honor our elders, and see a successful, positive person who grew up around drugs and alcohol, and violence,” said Martin.

His art has received so much attention that he has been contracted by the Save The Children World Organization for the past three years to teach art to youth in rural areas of the Central Valley. He also teaches art classes yearly at the Okla Chahta gathering in Bakersfield. Martin’s painting English Only is permanently hanging in the “Hall of Nations” at the USDA AG building in Washington, D.C., where the halls are filled with art from Native Americans and used as a backdrop for tribal leaders and the President of the United States. Martin’s art is on display at the Choctaw Nation Headquarters, Choctaw Casino & Resort, and the Choctaw Cultural Center, in Durant.

CHOCTAW LANGUAGE

The Choctaw language is the heart of the Choctaw people's identity. It encompasses the Native spirit of our celebrated ancestors and awakens the desire in younger generations to persevere.

Language is also one of the most important ways we exercise our sovereignty. For many of our grandparents and great-grandparents, speaking Choctaw was forbidden in an effort to force them to assimilate into white culture. Today, we speak our language to honor and acknowledge the experiences of our ancestors who sacrificed so much.

The language program has grown from offering one class via satellite at the University of Oklahoma in 1998, to employing several teachers and serving thousands of people per week through the website, community classes, public schools, colleges, online Internet classes, early childhood and elementary classes.



2,874 PEOPLE
WERE SERVED PER WEEK
THROUGH LANGUAGE CLASSES

The Language Apprenticeship Program places students in an immersive environment where they communicate only in Chahta. At the end of the program, apprentices graduate as fluent Choctaw speakers.



6 APPRENTICES



From "Chahta Vba Isht Taloa: The Choctaw Hymns"
Iti Fabvssa, February 2014

Whether in a rural area in southeastern Oklahoma, or in an urban gathering, one of the most distinctive elements of Choctaw Christian church services are the beautiful, powerful hymns sung in the Choctaw language. For some, these hymns convey a relationship with God that defines them as Choctaw people. The Choctaw Hymnal has been a part of Choctaw church services for many generations, but much of the knowledge about how the hymnal was created, and about the people who wrote the Choctaw hymns has been forgotten.

Long before Europeans arrived on this continent, Choctaw people had a deep spirituality and an ancient singing tradition. There were specific songs for hunting, for stickball, for playing hand games, for going to war, songs sung for the safety of loved ones away at war, songs a person sung when facing death, and songs sung during sacred dances at the Green Corn Ceremony.

Read more Iti Fabvssa articles at biskinik.com



CHOCTAW CULTURAL CENTER

Since its opening in July of 2021, the Choctaw Cultural Center has welcomed visitors to the Chahta Nowvt Aya, or the Choctaw Journey. Through interactive landscapes, demonstrations, art, cultural classes, food and much more, guests are fully immersed in the warmth and hospitality of the Choctaw people from start to finish. **Year two has been a busy one at the Choctaw Cultural Center! We welcomed new exhibits and kicked off some new traditions.**

EXHIBITS

- Keeping Our Heritage: Choctaw People, Life, and Animal Kinship, featuring Carole Ayers
- Ohoyo Hlampko Vhleha: The Influence of Matriarchs, featuring Brad Joe
- Bok Abaiya: Practiced Hands and the Arts of Choctaw Basketry
- The Gift, bronze statue by Brendan O'Neill

EVENTS

- Choctaw Nation Annual Art Show
- Movies on the Patio
- Annual Week of Giving Fundraiser
- Marvel's Echo Red Carpet Premiere, featuring multiple costumes

We also rolled out our membership and volunteer programs. For more information on being a member at the Cultural Center or volunteering, visit choctawculturalcenter.com.

OVER 250 MEMBERSHIPS

OVER 50 VOLUNTEERS

**OVER 50,000 VISITORS
SINCE THE CENTER OPENED**

THE CHOCTAW ARTIST REGISTRY

From opportunities such as participating at tribally sponsored community events, being able to sell products in Choctaw retail locations, or having artwork displayed at tribal facilities, the Choctaw Artist Registry gives artists unique opportunities and experiences. There are also countless opportunities for mentorship and being a culture bearer.

The Choctaw people have always been storytellers, sharing tribal history and culture. One way the stories are told is through art. Choctaw artists spend their lives and careers telling the Choctaw story, being culture bearers, those who pass on the culture to future generations.

Hundreds of Choctaw artists are registered in the Choctaw Nation's Artist Registry Program through a wide range of mediums such as weaving, painting, leatherwork, beadwork, photography, dance and writing. There are 100 recognized mediums available to register under, and many tribal artists are registered in more than one category. For more information visit choctawnation.com/services/artist-registry/

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- **Must be a CNO tribal member**
- **Copy of front and back of CDIB and tribal membership card**
- **Provide a short biography**
- **Visual artists: digital examples of work in the format of jpeg or pdf. Color copies with name and phone number on each.**
- **Literary or performing artists: list of published works, public performances or events**
- **Permission release to promote art in media**
- **Permission for Choctaw Nation to use images submitted in media promotions**



From "Traditional Choctaw Pottery"

Iti Fabvssa, November 2009

The development of pottery dates back over 5,000 years in the Southeastern United States. Through the millennia, the Indigenous people in this area, including the ancestors of today's Choctaw people, created a plethora of ceramic shapes, techniques, and designs. As time passed, pottery became more numerous and important. Even today, pieces of broken ceramics still quite literally litter the ground at ancestral 1000-year-old Choctaw village sites in Mississippi and Alabama. The artistry of the ceramic vessels produced by ancestral Choctaw potters living at Moundville (visit www.moundville.ua.edu) and other sites is regularly recognized as among the best ever made by Indigenous communities in the United States.

To our Choctaw ancestors 500 years ago, clay pots weren't just something to cook in and to eat out of. They were also used for storage, making glue, preparing medicines, processing fibers for cloth textiles, creating dyes, as items of gift and trade, offerings to Hvshtali, as protective coverings, incense-holders, musical instruments, and even to transport the fire to light flaming arrows to burn enemy villages. Our ancestors laughed over pottery, cried over pottery, and tripped over pottery nearly every day of their lives.

EXERCISING OUR SOVEREIGNTY



CHAHTA SPIRIT IN ACTION: KELBIE KENNEDY

Choctaw tribal member Kelbie Kennedy is the first ever National Tribal Affairs Advocate for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In this role, she advises the agency and its administrator on tribal affairs while working to ensure that FEMA lives up to its treaty and trust responsibilities to tribal nations. Before joining FEMA, Kennedy worked as the policy manager for national security and community safety initiatives for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). At NCAI, she worked on national policy issues surrounding tribal emergency management and resilience, tribal homeland security, tribal border issues, violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women, public safety and justice, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and international Indigenous rights.

Kennedy has long been a champion for not only Choctaws but Indigenous people worldwide. She also played a pivotal role in the effort to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act, restoring tribal nations' criminal jurisdiction over certain crimes. "I am honored to be the first tribal political appointee in FEMA history and will work hard to ensure that Tribal Nations and tribal sovereignty are at the forefront of our efforts," Kennedy said in a statement. "Growing up on my tribal nation's reservation in Southeastern Oklahoma, I learned firsthand that tribal nations are the first—and many times the only—line of defense when disaster strikes Indian Country. When tribal nations have the necessary resources and support they need, the entire community is better prepared and able to respond to disasters."

"We are so proud of everything Kelbie has done and will continue to do on behalf of Indian Country, and we look forward to seeing her continued efforts to make sure that Indian Country is ready when disaster strikes," said Chief Batton. Kennedy was born and raised in Buffalo Valley on the Choctaw Nation Reservation. She received her Juris Doctor and certificate in American Indian Law from the

University of Oklahoma, College of Law.

CELEBRATING CHOCTAW SOVEREIGNTY

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the current Choctaw Constitution, ratified in 1983.

The Preamble of the Constitution establishes the Choctaw Nation's guiding principles:

“We, the members of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, invoking the will and guidance of Almighty God in order to promote the general welfare, to insure tranquility and to secure to ourselves and our posterity the blessings of our ancestral heritage, culture and tribal sovereignty, do hereby ordain and establish, pursuant to the inherent tribal sovereignty of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, this Constitution for the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.”

To read the current Choctaw Constitution and other historical documents, visit
choctawnation.com/about/history/historical-documents/



from “The Choctaw Constitution of 1826”

Iti Fabvssa, September 2021

The Choctaw Nation has had multiple constitutions that have established and helped enumerate its governing principles. The first official Choctaw Constitution was ratified by the General

Council August 5, 1826. During this time, the Choctaw Nation was under the threat of removal by the United States. Choctaw leaders hoped to persuade the United States to drop discussions of removal by showing U.S. officials that Choctaw people could be “progressive” and “civilized.” With this constitution, Choctaw leadership embedded long-established laws and practices that already had a place in Choctaw culture into a governmental form recognizable by U.S. leaders and citizens.

While Choctaw leaders had long performed all roles of government, writing and approving a western-style constitution in 1826 was one means of demonstrating governing capability to the U.S. This constitution included elements of both U.S.-style government and Choctaw traditional governance. Other such examples of blending cultures included inviting missionaries into the Choctaw Nation to build schools and creating a police force known as the Lighthorse.

Read more Iti Fabvssa articles at biskinik.com



ON NOVEMBER 11, 2023, THE NEWLY ADOPTED CHOCTAW PLEDGE WAS FIRST PERFORMED AT THE VETERANS DAY CEREMONY AT TVSHKA HOMMA. THIS PLEDGE IS MEANT TO FOLLOW THE U.S. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE AT OFFICIAL EVENTS.

The pledge is a declaration of the Chahta Spirit of faith, family, and culture, and it also announces that the Choctaw Nation is a sovereign nation governed by self-rule, faith, and traditions created from the sacrifices of our ancestors.

IN CHOCTAW

Chahta okla ĭ shvhpa aiokpvchi li; yakni yvt Chihowa ĭ yimmi hokmvt hlampko hosh hikĭa chĭ. Ibai achvffa vhleha yvt Na Yimmi, Chukkachvffa, Micha Aiimvlhpesa ya isht o hikĭa hosh holittobli bilia chĭ.

IN ENGLISH

I salute the flag of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, whose members, characterized by tenacity, resilience, and belief in God, will forever honor its representation of faith, family, and culture.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

In 2022, the Choctaw Tribal Police unveiled a new look for their patrol vehicles. The new wrap featured a black and white photo of a group of Choctaw Lighthorsemen taken in Antlers, Oklahoma in 1896. The creative design also includes using the Choctaw language, Apohkochi micha Intoksvali (Protect and Serve) and Chihowa II Anukcheto (In God We Trust).

On June 2, 2023, Choctaw Nation Law Enforcement went one step further, renaming the police force “Lighthorse” to honor the original Choctaw Lighthorsemen who served the tribe so many years ago.



733
TOTAL PUBLIC
SAFETY POSITIONS



76
CROSS DEPUTIZATIONS



461
SECURITY GUARD
POSITIONS FILLED



from “Issuba Vmbinili Tvshka:
Choctaw Lighthorsemen”
Iti Fabvssa, October 2016

In 1820 the Choctaw chiefs were forced into the Treaty of Doak’s Stand. While having to cede more lands, the chiefs set aside funds to be used for the future. Some of these funds were used to create the Choctaw Lighthorse. The Choctaw Lighthorse were a group of men given the responsibility of being the principal law enforcement in the Choctaw Nation.

The Lighthorse were selected due to their respect for and involvement in the community. On a few accounts, some Lighthorsemen were not even Choctaw by blood, but they had married in and proved themselves members of the Choctaw community. It was the duty of the Lighthorsemen to assist the community in times of need.

During the American Civil War, renegades ravaged the Indian Territory, leading to the destruction of many parts of the Choctaw Nation. While many of the men were at war, the Lighthorsemen acted as home guards by protected the community and aiding families any way they could. The years following the Civil War were rough as some of the most notable stories about the Lighthorse come from this era.



INDIAN CHILD WELFARE

Native American tribes across the country rejoiced this summer when the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision upholding the Indian Child Welfare Act and protecting Native children from being removed from their tribal communities. ICWA is a statute passed by Congress to address the agency policies and practices that resulted in the wholesale separation of Indian children from their families. State and private agencies were removing as many as 25 – 35% of Indian children from their families and placing many of these children in non-Indian foster and adoptive homes.

Congress determined that cultural ignorance and biases within the child welfare system were significant causes of this problem. Congress also recognized that it is in the best interest of the child to maintain tribal connections and that children are vital to tribes' continued existence. ICWA was designed to “protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian Tribes and families.” While ICWA has been in place since 1978, compliance with ICWA has been inconsistent across, and even within, states. As a result, many of the issues that ICWA was intended to address continue to exist today, but the June 15 ruling is a step in the right direction. It promotes the uniform application of an important Federal law to protect the rights of Indian children, their parents, and their tribes, regardless of the child welfare worker, judge, or state involved.

CHOCTAW CHILDREN IN STATE CUSTODY:

ON RESERVATION: 141

OUT OF AREA (STILL IN OKLAHOMA): 272

IN OTHER STATES:

292



HUNTING AND FISHING IN CHOCTAW COUNTRY

When it became clear the hunting and fishing compacts with the State of Oklahoma would be allowed to expire in 2021, the Choctaw Nation began updating tribal codes and preparing to defend tribal members' inherent rights to hunt and fish on the Choctaw reservation without a state license. The Choctaw Nation established the Wildlife Conservation Department, which "seeks to balance the value wildlife provides with what mankind provides back to nature."

THE NATION SUCCESSFULLY ADMINISTERED ITS FIRST HUNTING SEASON IN 2022

Black bears in Southeastern Oklahoma were nearly eradicated because of overhunting, but through concerted efforts to save the animals, the black bear population is now at a healthy level. This year, the Wildlife Conservation Department implemented workshops to teach tribal members about bear hunting and conservation to help maintain these levels.



From "The Big Hunt"
Iti Fabvssa, December 2015

In the Choctaw calendar, the months after the agricultural fields were harvested are known as Little Hunger Month and Big Hunger Month, roughly corresponding with November and December. This is when Choctaw men would leave the villages on an extended hunting trip known as Owachito (meaning big hunt). The Owachito was so named because it could last for months and take hunters over hundreds of miles of territory. Little and Big Hunger Months received their names because Choctaw hunters would take limited, light-weight food rations with them on the Owachito and because fasting for spiritual purification was an essential part of hunting. It was a hungry time of year.

When a hunting party returned to their village, it was a time of joy and celebration, both because the men had made it home safely, and because of the essential food and materials that they brought with them. Hunters are said to have shared the bounty with their estranged wives and other households that had no one to provide meat.

SECTION

LEAVING A LASTING IMPACT





BEING GOOD STEWARDS

Fiscal responsibility is a top priority for the Choctaw Nation. When we invest in our people, small businesses and local communities, we are ensuring the financial stability of our tribe for generations to come.

The revenue the Choctaw Nation takes in funds over 150 programs and services for tribal members, numerous community and infrastructure projects, and helps us foster relationships and partnerships with local communities.



REVENUE

- 44%** BUSINESS OPERATING INCOME (NET)
- 38%** FEDERAL AND STATE GRANTS
- 13%** MEDICARE AND THIRD-PARTY INSURANCE
- 3%** GENERAL GOVERNMENTAL REVENUE
- 2%** HOUSING INCOME

Values are taken from the 2022 Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma audit.



From “Choctaw Government – Division of Commerce”

Iti Fabvssa, March 2020

Prior to European arrival, Choctaws had a vast trade network ranging from the Eastern Woodlands to Mesoamerica, which brought items like corn and copper that we have since made our own. When Europeans came to the Americas and wanted to trade with us, Choctaws taught Europeans our practice of gift-giving. While the English tried to impose their economic system that centered on markets and creating products for sale in them, we chose to deal more with the French since they respected and abided by our gift-giving protocol. Over time, the relationship with the French moved from solely gift-giving into a formal trade relationship. As part of a trading economy, Choctaws provided furs, while Europeans brought guns, metal tools and other finished products. While European empires competed for dominance across the globe and in Choctaw homelands, Choctaws used European competition against them. This also provided us with an opportunity to learn from European innovations to improve our own technologies.



COMMERCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

CHOCTAW BEEF

The Choctaw Nation is always working on new ways to develop commerce ventures and relationships that benefit tribal members and their communities. The Nation operates eight ranches throughout the reservation dedicated to raising cattle for Choctaw Beef. Through the new Freezer Beef Program, consumers can order a quarter, half, or whole side of beef and work directly with the processor on packaging preferences. The beef raised and processed in the Choctaw Nation is of the highest quality, and each animal is tracked to provide consumers with information about how and where it was raised.

In addition to the Freezer Beef Program, the Choctaw Nation has partnered with public schools in Atoka, Wapanucka, Coalgate, Coleman, and LeFlore to provide fresh beef for student meals.

BROADBAND ACCESS

While living in a rural area certainly has its benefits, it also comes with challenges for those who need access to high-speed internet and cannot get it, whether it's because it is unavailable in the area or it is too expensive. The Affordable Connectivity Program won a grant totaling \$592,000 to assist in outreach efforts on the Choctaw reservation. With this grant, we will be able to assist tribal members in applying for help through the program.

For more information on the Affordable Connectivity Program, visit acp.choctawnation.com.

The Choctaw Nation also received a \$56,000 grant to conduct a technical feasibility study of the reservation to determine which areas are “unserved” or “underserved” by broadband access.

EMERGING AVIATION

In October, the Choctaw Nation broke ground on a new Emergency Aviation Technology Center (EATC). The state-of-the-art facility, located near Redden, Oklahoma, will serve as a hub for cutting-edge research, development, testing, and evaluation for manned and unmanned aerial system technologies.



THERE'S SOMETHING FOR YOU HERE

One of the Choctaw Nation's strategic goals is to be the place everyone wants to work. To meet that goal, we've implemented a broad range of competitive benefits that are designed to attract top-quality talent and keep them here.

WANT TO MEET YOUR FITNESS GOALS?

Associates have free access to our gyms, with classes, personal trainers, and top-of-the-line exercise equipment.

LOVE TO LEARN?

We have training and certification programs that can help you get ahead in your career. We even have a tuition reimbursement benefit if college is part of your plan.

NEED A LITTLE BANK ACCOUNT BOOST?

EVEN allows associates to get paid up to a week early, so you can access your money when you need it most.

NOT FEELING WELL?

Our walk-in Employee Health Clinics are free for associates and their families!

IN ADDITION TO THESE FANTASTIC BENEFITS, THE CHOCTAW NATION ALSO OFFERS:

- Flexible Schedules
- Free Meals for Casino Employees
- 401k with 5% Match
- Disability and Life Insurance
- PerkSpot Discount Program
- Pet Insurance
- Individualized Career Paths



12,071 ASSOCIATES
AS OF 9/30/2023

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OPEN POSITIONS OR TO APPLY TODAY,
VISIT [CAREERS.CHOCTAWNATION.COM](https://careers.choctawnation.com)

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-2025

STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL GROWTH AND ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Ensure financial sustainability by growing our businesses, reducing costs and strengthening local economies.

FOCUS AREAS

- Business Growth & Financial Sustainability
- Economic Impact
- Operational Efficiencies
- Job Creation

SUPPORT SERVICE DELIVERY TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

Enhance the well-being of tribal members by advocating, allocating resources, and remaining committed to improving quality of life, tribal member self-sufficiency, and independence.

FOCUS AREAS

- Housing
- Health
- Education
- Outreach Services
- Member Services
- Special Services
- Elder Services
- STEAM

PROTECT AND PROMOTE CHOCTAW CULTURE AND EXERCISE SOVEREIGNTY

Assert, defend, protect and promote our rights as a sovereign nation to improve the economic, environmental, social and cultural prosperity.

FOCUS AREAS

- Legislative Agenda
- Cultural Heritage

BECOME THE EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

Attract, retain and support professional growth to develop a diverse workforce for the Choctaw Nation and our local communities.

FOCUS AREAS

- Recruitment & Retention
- Training & Development
- Voice of Associate
- Employee Morale/Culture

ACHIEVE DIGITAL, DATA, AND COMMUNICATION TRANSFORMATION

Strategically position the Choctaw Nation in the digital economy through adoption and implementation of broadband, technology, analytics, messaging, and innovation.

FOCUS AREAS

- Broadband
- Communications
- Data Analytics
- Advanced Technologies
- Information Technology



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

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Sign up for Choctaw Nation text notifications to receive important announcements, office closure alerts or upcoming events in your area.

VISIT: [CHOCTAWNATION.COM/ALERTS](https://choctawnation.com/alerts)

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