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US Army names next generation assault aircraft 'Cheyenne II'

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — On April 15 the U.S. Army announced its Future Long-Range Assault Aircraft to be named the MV-75 Cheyenne II during the Army Aviation Association of America's annual conference.

The MV-75 Cheyenne II represents a new era of Army aviation, with capabilities that far exceed the current fleet. This medium-size, vertical lift, multi-mission aircraft combines the vertical agility of a helicopter with the speed and range of an airplane, allowing it to fly twice as fast and twice as far.

These tactical characteristics enable "full squad insertion at extended range, expanding medevac reach well beyond today's golden hour, and enabling large-scale, long-range air assault operations that can reshape the battlefield," said the Hon.

Brent G. Ingraham, assistant secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology.

"The Cheyenne people represent a resilient warrior culture and embody the key attributes of the MV-75 — speed, reach, lethality, and adaptability," said Hon. Ingraham. "I am honored to be part of this historic occasion as we officially name our multi-mission tiltrotor aircraft."

The aircraft's capabilities are supported by an adaptable digital backbone built on a modular, open-systems approach. This design allows for the rapid integration of new technologies to counter emerging threats and avoid costly redesigns, while also enabling the aircraft to self-deploy globally via strategic airlift, which reduces

CHEYENNE II pg. 7



Cheyenne Chief Gordon Yellowman stands outside of the Cheyenne II aircraft while Northern Cheyenne President Gene Small and Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Gov. Reggie Wassana sit in the cockpit. (Submitted photo)



Photos / Adriel Clements

"Nothing Better": Graduation Banquet Honors Students, Families and Futures

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

Honoring graduates each year is one of the highlights for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Higher Education Program.

From high school to universities, graduates and their families gathered April 16 at the R.E.Sp.E.C.T. Gymnasium in Concho, Okla., to celebrate for the annual graduation banquet.

"This is our annual graduation banquet we hold every spring. For this graduation banquet we recognize our 2025 December graduates, spring '26 graduates and then our summer '26 graduates and this is by far the biggest banquet we've ever held," Higher Education Scholarship Program director Breanna Faris said.

Entering the banquet room, graduates were met with gold and black colored balloon arches, as well as eye catching decorum displayed throughout the room and photo backdrops for the many memories graduates and their families captured throughout the night.

Typically, Faris said approximately 100 students register for the event but this year they had close to 200 registered.

"It's really good seeing so many in the community, so many high school and college graduates," Faris said.

Planning for the banquet months out and setting the

date a year prior, Faris said the banquet is something the program looks forward to every year as they want to provide a space for families to come together and celebrate their graduates — "there's just nothing better."

Faris said all graduates deserve to be celebrated as a lot of people don't graduate high school and don't graduate college.

"So if we can celebrate them and just really provide a space for their whole family to celebrate, it's the best thing we can do for them," Faris said.

This year that space included an American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter being invited for the first time to interpret for a hearing challenged student. When students register for the banquet, they are asked if they require any special accommodations on the registration forms. Faris said they had one student that indicated she needed a sign language interpreter and so they searched until they found one, which the mother was thankful for.

"The mother said nobody ever asks and so we're just really glad that we can again provide that space, provide those accommodations so the whole family can enjoy it," Faris said.

Cheyenne and Arapaho citizen, Nina Woods, parent of Marcella Sankey, who will

be graduating from the Oklahoma School for the Deaf (OSF) was very grateful for the program acknowledging Sankey being from OSF and being ASL.

"I cried when they called me to acknowledge her and wanting to get an interpreter, I don't know how to put into words how grateful I am. I don't want to keep saying grateful but that's how I feel, I'm getting teared up at how accepting of her, just for her disability. I'm at a loss for words of what they did for her and I'll forever be grateful for that," Woods said as her eyes filled with water.

Glancing at Sankey throughout the banquet, Woods said she was able to enjoy the event with the ASL interpreter as it made the event more enjoyable for her.

"The first tribal event ever that she's been able to enjoy and not try to look around and feel lost and what's going on so yes she really loved it," Woods said.

Turning a celebratory evening into a memorable one, Cayden Little Coyote, 17, was excited to attend the graduation banquet as valedictorian of her class from Seiling High School in Seiling, Okla.

"I was a little nervous, but I thought it was really neat to see all these people that I grew up with pretty much at



Valedictorians of their graduating classes are Cayden Little Coyote from Seiling High School and LaKylah Black from Riverside Indian School who both receive blankets at the graduate banquet. (Photos / Latoya Lonelodge)

this banquet tonight, knowing that they're graduating and that they're moving on to the next step in their life," Little Coyote said.

Not knowing that she was one of two valedictorians out of the entire graduation banquet, Little Coyote was one of the last groups to be called on and was recognized with an eighth-generation blanket, to which Little Coyote was surprised.

"I was really nervous because I was in group eight, which is apparently the last

GRADUATION pg. 6



Marcella Sankey, who attends Oklahoma School for the Deaf, receives her certificate and graduation stole at the graduation banquet.

Offering bath, body and hope: Nature's Farm Girl offers homemade and organic products

By Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

(CLINTON, Okla.) In the heart of Oklahoma, known locally in the Clinton, Okla., community for their organic and homemade products, Shonda Williams, Cheyenne and Arapaho citizen and owner of Nature's Farm Girl, has brought more than just the common bath and body store to town, but has also formulated products that bring bigger meaning to her tribal community.

Born in Watonga, Okla., and raised in Arapaho, Okla., Williams and her family had formerly moved to Pennsylvania before settling in the Clinton community. Williams moved back to Oklahoma because her and her husband wanted to raise their daughters in a small community where they would thrive. Williams had four daughters that all attended Clinton Public Schools and while they were at school, Williams was a full time stay at home mom.

"I got to actually have the privilege of sitting at home. So when they decided to go branch off and go to college and do their thing, I was left to try to figure out what in the world I wanted to do," Williams said.

Williams had an educational background in chemistry and biology. She had also been diagnosed with secondary adrenaline sufficiency and had started losing her hair.

"About that time, that's whenever they came out with those shampoo bars and stuff on YouTube and I had went

to a clinic and they wanted like 40 grand to do my hair," Williams said.

Williams took it upon herself to do a shampoo bar, so she could make her hair grow.

"So, I sat and dabbled with it and ended up making a shampoo bar and ended up making my hair grow and then it sparked an interest," Williams said.

Experimenting with making different kinds of soaps, William's interest branched out from there. Her first shampoo bar was oat milk and honey. From then on, Williams started doing sugar scrubs and other little products before going back to school. Williams decided to go back to school to obtain her masters in cosmetic science.

Starting her business out of her home originally in 2015, Williams faced family losses and had to close down her business for a while. Then in 2024, Williams got in the lab and started making candles and experimenting.

"That's kind of where I put all my energy into and then I decided, well let's open this store, my husband's like what are you going to do with all of this? I'm like, I don't know let's open this store," Williams said.

Williams had no knowledge of what it took to open a store, just a basic accounting degree as she said she jumped feet first into opening her brick and mortar

in downtown Clinton. She started taking classes on YouTube and learning how to run TikTok and even started taking AI classes, everything she could think of, she started doing.

"Then we built the company and it just started, we started going around and my daughter and I started doing pop-ups and trying to get the name out there," Williams said.

Inside Nature's Farm Girl, homemade products can be found from designer candles, from high end fragrances of perfumes, serums, space washes, body scrubs, body whips, lotions, lip glosses, bath bubbles, bubble bars and more.

"Whatever you can think of, I probably have in store and I try to keep all of the interests of the kids and I just did formulas for the new bubble moisturizers too," Williams said.

Following TikTok trends, Williams had formulated a new sugar scrub, almost like kinetic sand. With everything homemade, Williams ensures all her formulas and ingredients are checked.

"Everything's pH balanced before we even put it in the jar and we try to keep it all natural, with minimal ingredients," Williams said.

New products are made weekly with hair perfumes and her best selling product has been shampoo bars and conditioner bars.

Looking back, Wil-



Shonda Williams (left) Cheyenne and Arapaho citizen and owner of Nature's Farm Girl and her husband Andre Williams holding The Marquis Who's Who award. (Submitted photos)



NATURE'S FARM GIRL pg. 4

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After delays, OMB clears \$289M for CDFI Fund, including \$28M for Native lenders

Brian Edwards, Tribal Business News

The Office of Management and Budget have cleared \$289 million in fiscal year 2025 funding for the U.S. Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund, including \$28 million for the Native American CDFI Assistance Program, according to federal budget documents.

The funds were apportioned April 8, making the full FY2025 appropriation available to Treasury for obligation. The total includes \$188 million for the CDFI Program, \$40 million for the Bank Enterprise Award Program, \$28 million for Native financial and technical assistance, \$24 million for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative, and \$9 million for the Small Dollar Loan Program.

Treasury has not announced a timeline for issuing FY2025 NACA Financial Assistance awards or disbursing funds.

The action follows months of uncertainty over FY2025 funding for Native CDFIs. In September, Treasury awarded \$1.95 million in NACA technical assistance grants to

10 Native CDFIs, about half of the \$3.72 million awarded the prior year — while indicating that additional awards would be subject to funding availability, according to prior *Tribal Business News* reporting. At the time, tribal advocates warned that most of the \$28 million appropriated for NACA, about \$24 million, could be withheld without further action by federal agencies.

The move follows coordinated advocacy in recent weeks by the Native CDFI Network, tribal leaders and Native-serving organizations, including a March letter signed by more than 100 Native CDFIs, tribal nations and partners calling on the administration to release FY2025 funding and uphold federal trust and treaty responsibilities.

The funding was cleared ahead of House and Senate hearings this week where Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought faced bipartisan scrutiny over delays in distributing congressionally appropriated funds, including questions tied to the CDFI Fund and other community development

programs. Lawmakers said funding had not been released months after appropriation, while Vought said the administration had not impounded funds.

Separately, the Treasury announced plans to issue rules governing CDFI Fund awards under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. The agency said the rules are intended to ensure compliance with federal law and limit eligibility for certain federally funded benefits.

Treasury also said it will add provisions to CDFI Fund agreements requiring certified CDFIs to maintain policies and procedures demonstrating compliance with federal anti-discrimination laws. Under the proposed changes, CDFIs could face remedies for noncompliance, including potential decertification, termination of remaining funds or recapture of prior awards, Treasury said.

The agency said it will issue a notice of proposed rulemaking outlining the changes.

For second time Trump seeks to eliminate federal funding for tribal colleges and universities

Graham Lee Brewer, AP

For the second year in a row, the Trump administration is proposing slashing federal funding for tribal colleges and universities.

President Donald Trump's fiscal year 2027 budget proposal calls for a \$1.5 trillion increase to defense spending and would carve billions of dollars out of programs that fulfill trust and treaty responsibilities to tribal nations, including entirely eliminating funding for the Institute for American Indian Arts, the country's only federally funded college for contemporary Native American arts.

The budget proposal released last week also calls for cutting funding for TCUs, as well as funding for two schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Education: Haskell Indian Nations University in Kansas and the Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute in New Mexico. Students at both colleges sued the BIE last year over funding and staffing cuts made by the administration.

"If this budget was to pass, our TCUs would be forced to close within a year," said Ahniwake Rose, president of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, which represents the interests of tribal colleges and universities.

Trump's budget proposal also slashes billions of federal dollars in housing, business, and infrastructure grants that benefit Native Americans.

There are about three dozen TCUs operated by tribal nations in the U.S., and they provide education to mostly

rural parts of the country, often at a significant discount for tribal citizens. Most of them get the majority of their funding from the federal government. It's a financial commitment tied to the country's trust responsibilities and treaty rights owed to tribes.

Last year, Trump also cut funding for TCUs, including several grants at agencies like USDA that support education for tribal citizens. He also cut funding for minority-serving institutions and reallocated some of it to historically Black colleges and Universities and TCUs.

Leaders at tribal colleges said they aren't expecting those reallocated funds this year.

Rose said that, just like last year, it's now up to Congress to defend federal funding for TCUs.

"These cuts are unacceptable, and I will fight relentlessly to protect IAIA and secure the federal funding they need," Sen. Ben Ray Lujan, a Democrat from New Mexico and a member of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, said in a statement. "President Trump's budget proposal to eliminate IAIA's federal funding is a direct attack on Native communities and yet another example of how the administration is turning its back on Native communities."

Brewer reports for the AP's Race and Ethnicity team, focusing on Indigenous communities and tribal nations. He is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and is based in Oklahoma.

CEO of Boys and Girls Club chapter charged with embezzlement

Kimberly Querry-Thompson

(CANADIAN COUNTY, Okla.) A woman who was supposed to be supporting young children in Canadian County has been charged with embezzling thousands of dollars.

Melissa Tsoatdaddle was arrested and charged with one count of embezzlement and one count of violating an Oklahoma statute via computer.

Officials say Tsoatdaddle was the CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of Darlington in Canadian County when an investigation was launched by the Canadian County Sheriff's Office.

"Back in 2025 in September, we got a board member from the Boys and Girls Club of America that was assigned to the Darlington Schools came into the Canadian County Sheriff's Office to report a possible embezzlement from the CEO," said Maj. Adam Flowers, with the Canadian County Sher-

iff's Office. "Ms. Tsoatdaddle was accused of embezzling about \$52,000 and using a debit card for the Boys and Girls Club to make personal purchases for approximately two years before she was caught."

From August 2023 through August 2025, officials say Tsoatdaddle fraudulently embezzled more than \$52,000 that belonged to Boys and Girls Club of Darlington.

According to the probable cause affidavit, Tsoatdaddle used funds from the Boys and Girls Club to pay for her private utilities, make purchases at Walmart, pay for food, and medical bills.



Melissa Tsoatdaddle was arrested and charged with one count of embezzlement and one count of violating an Oklahoma statute via computer. Tsoatdaddle was the CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Darlington.

Investigators say the charges in question included:

- Cash App: \$8,365
- ATM: \$2,403
- OG&E: \$3,221.58
- City of El Reno: \$352.36
- Walmart: \$25,607.87
- Target: \$1,128.93

- Clothes: \$1,900.67
 - Food: \$4,459.24
 - Car: \$330.59
 - Miscellaneous: \$3,118.11
 - Medical: \$1,032.92
 - Laundry: \$340.
- If convicted, she could face several years in prison.

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NATURE'S FARM GIRL

continued from pg. 2



Williams never imagined herself opening a store of this magnitude, selling bath and body products. But hopes this will bring hope to others that they can achieve anything they set their minds to.

"I've just been a home wife, I sat home and took care of my family," Williams said.

When Williams lived in Pennsylvania, she worked for McNeil Pharmaceutical, which is Johnson and Johnson, as she had a bachelors degree in chemistry and a minor in biology.

When she moved back to Clinton, there weren't many jobs with her type of degrees. As a stay at home mom and faced with a diagnosis, Williams was able to formulate a one of a kind shampoo to start her business off.

"And I never imagined it would ever grow like that, but it did," Williams said.

Nature's Farm Girl was chosen as the Marquis Who's Who in 2025, a prestigious award, and was also chosen as top 100 entrepreneurs. Williams' family business picture will be displayed along with her biography at the White House for a year.

"I'm 55 years old and I done it, I think the biggest thing too, is I was telling my husband, there's so many people in life and our history with being tribal, kids act like they don't have the opportunity to get out there and really do things, I just really wanted to show my daughters I could do something," Williams said.

With opening her store, Williams believes nothing can hold her back as she wants her store to thrive and wants others to be inspired.

"We can still do things, nothing can hold us back and I really wanted to let it thrive, that's what I just keep pushing myself for is the thriving part and letting my family know, my kids know and other kids out there know," Williams said.

Grounding her business as family owned that stands on true values and prioritizing customers first, Williams believes her store is a safe place for all ages.

"Our family has put a lot of hard work and dedication into it and we stand by our true values, which is our customers are always first. We live by our all natural and we don't change any of our products, or we don't minimize the ingredients to just sell a product," Williams said.

What Williams hopes to accomplish overall with her business is to show other tribal citizens anything is possible when starting a business.

"Showing other young tribal citizens that it doesn't matter how much money you have, if you have entrepreneur's skills,



you can go out there and do it and with hard work and dedication, it can get done," Williams said.

Nature's Farm Girl is located at 703A Frisco in Clinton, Okla., open from Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Denver Mayor Mike Johnston Names Advisory Committee Members for American Indian Cultural Embassy Project

DENVER, CO - Mayor Mike Johnston and Denver Human Rights & Community

Partnerships (HRCPP) today announced the members of a newly formed advisory committee that will guide the development of the American Indian Cultural Embassy.

This announcement follows the appointment of Ernest House Jr., member of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, as project lead.

"This advisory group reflects the strength, diversity, and leadership of Native communities," said Mayor Johnston. "Their guidance will be critical in creating a Cultural Embassy that honors Indigenous cultures, elevates Native voices, and provides a welcoming space for learning and connection for all Denver residents."

The advisory group includes leaders from multiple Tribal Nations with expertise across Tribal

governance, community leadership, cultural preservation, and economic development:

- Rick Williams, Cheyenne and Lakota Nations - Tribal leader with experience in cultural advocacy and community engagement.
- Montoya Whiteman, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma - Expert in communications, nonprofit leadership, and Indigenous advocacy.
- Ben Jacobs, Osage Nation - Entrepreneur and community builder promoting Indigenous business and cultural initiatives.
- Lucille Echohawk, Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma - Advocate with long-standing service in Native communities.
- Ashley Stiles, Chickasaw Nation - Leader focused on Native economic development.
- Kim Varilek, Eastern Shoshone and Oglala

Lakota Nations - Legal and policy leader advancing Tribal governance, environmental protection and intergovernmental collaboration.

"Working with this advisory group allows us to center Native voices in every aspect of the Cultural Embassy's planning," said Ernest House, Jr. "Their knowledge and lived experience are essential to creating a space that honors history, supports living cultures, and strengthens Indigenous leadership for generations to come."

Funded through the 2025 Vibrant Denver Bond, the American Indian Cultural Embassy will serve as a community-driven cultural and educational hub. House and the advisory committee will engage community members, study best practices from similar institutions, and support initiatives that advance environmental justice for American Indian and Alaska Native communities.

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- Concho, OK Powwow Grounds, Cabin Area
Wednesday, May 20, 2026
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Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes
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Friday, May 8, 2026
Concho Powwow Grounds, 400 James Hawk Dr, Concho OK

9:45 am Cedar Ceremony
10:00 am Protect our Future Program
Prayer: Margaret Behan
Welcome: Governor Reggie Wassana
Lt. Governor Hershel Gorham
C2 Legislator Milan Roman Nose
A2 Legislator Kendrick Sleeper
Youth Keynote: Amber Beard, Daughter of Ida Beard
Special Moment: Reading of Cheyenne Arapaho MMIP Names by Cheyenne & Arapaho Youth Council (CAYC)
Program Support: Andrea Patterson, Director Social Services
Angela Plumley, Executive Director of Transportation
Closing: LaRenda Morgan, Chair of Cheyenne Arapaho MMIP Chapter
Parade Lineup: Chris Roman Nose, Parade Coordinator
Lunch by LSC: Lunch served at Respect Gym

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CAYC Youth Attend Close Up Native Youth Summit in Washington, D.C.

Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Tribune Staff

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Youth Council (CAYC) was given the opportunity to attend the Close Up Native Youth Summit held April 12-17 in Washington, D.C., joining Native American youth from Alaska, South Dakota, and Arizona for a five-day civic education program focused on leadership, government, and advocacy.

During their time in the nation's capital, CAYC members lived and learned alongside students from across the country while participating in seminars with policymakers, workshops, and guided visits to historic sites, museums, and government offices. The program emphasized civic engagement, encouraging students to explore key domestic and international issues while developing their own voices as leaders.

Throughout the week, students participated in small group workshops and comprehensive study visits, culminating in presentations on Capitol Hill. Each group developed policy proposals addressing issues impacting their communities, including child welfare, Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP), education quality, and poverty in Native communities. Students presented their ideas to members of Congress, staff, and policy experts.

CAYC member Maelee Whiteman-Morton described the experience as both fun and memorable. She shared that she made new friends from Alaska and enjoyed participating in workshops and visiting museums and memorials. "We took a lot of pictures and made so many memories," she said, adding that presenting a child welfare proposal on Capitol Hill was a highlight of her trip.

Malaina Byrd, CAYC Hammon representative, said the trip helped her grow personally. "This trip has



CAYC officers and members attend event in Washington, D.C., Sophia Plentybears, Maelee Whiteman-Morton, Amber Beard, Bryce Black, Shannon Russell, Justyn Hawk, Aziah Pedro, Koneihii Sleeper, Ryliegh Burns, Mya Levi, Malaina Byrd, Josephine Sweezy and Amerie Sam. (Photos submitted by Jerilynn Longknife)

taught me how to speak up and use my voice, and get out of my comfort zone," she said. Byrd also reflected on meaningful visits to memorials and her experience advocating for Cheyenne and Arapaho language preservation during her group presentation.

Amber Beard, CAYC communications officer, emphasized the importance of civic engagement. "Presenting at Capitol Hill showed that we have a voice and we can make a change," she said. Beard noted that the experience improved her public speaking skills and

broadened her understanding of issues affecting Native communities.

YOUTH COUNCIL pg. 6



Sophia Plentybears, Maelee Whiteman-Morton, Amber Beard, Bryce Black, Shannon Russell, Justyn Hawk, Aziah Pedro, Koneihii Sleeper, Ryliegh Burns, Mya Levi, Malaina Byrd, Josephine Sweezy and Amerie Sam.



Justyn 'Smoke' Hawk, CAYC Treasurer



Aziah Pedro, CAYC Secretary

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2026

JULY 31 - AUGUST 2

THE 100 DAY COUNTDOWN BEGINS

PHOTO CREDIT: CODY HAMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

EL RENO 100 YEARS OF 1866 CHEYENNE and ARAPAO TRIBES



GRADUATION

continued from pg. 1

group of high schoolers and I had no idea that I was one of two valedictorians,” Little Coyote said.

Getting to spend the evening with her family celebrating her upcoming graduation, Little Coyote said she felt honored and enjoyed seeing old friends from around the community.

“I really enjoyed seeing a lot of people that I know from the youth council that I’ve seen and I used to play basketball with some of the girls here and other girls that I’ve ran around with powwows with here, it was so cool to see them here,” Little Coyote said.

With the goal of celebrating the graduates, the banquet also incorporated the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Department of Labor Adult Education program and GED graduates. Three GED graduates were included in the graduate banquet to celebrate their accomplishments.

“Tonight is a good reminder of why we do what we do, making sure that we get our services to help our tribal citizens on their educational journey, so tonight to see the families, seeing them excited and proud, that’s always the best reward and a good reminder for us to do good work,” Carrie Whitlow, executive direction for the Dept. of Education said.

Whitlow stated it’s important to celebrate students as Native Americans in general tend to look at students from a deficient lens.

“I think tonight is a good reminder or just a good way to focus on the positive things of what we’re doing, we do have high school graduates and I feel like every year we have more and more graduates. If you look at the list tonight it was extensive and the room was full and not only are they graduating high school but they’re going to college and they’re graduating with college degrees,” Whitlow said.

Looking back over the years on the graduation banquet, Whitlow commended the higher education program and their progress in putting the banquet together.

“This banquet used to last four hours long because the program was so long and they’ve done such a great job at decorating, they decorate this whole facility, they order the decorations themselves and they’ve just made it so efficient,” Whitlow said.

As the banquet progressed, remarks were made by Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Gov. Reggie Wassana and Lt. Gov. Hershel Gorham. Then graduates were honored individually and



Tribal youth, Kyla Banks receives her graduation stole from Department of Education Executive Director Dr. Carrie Whitlow. (Photo / Latoya Lonelodge)

presented with their graduation soles and certificates as well as photos alongside the governor and lieutenant governor.

Ending the special evening, what made the banquet special this year was seeing the families and support come together for the graduates, “Just seeing all the uncles, aunties, parents, grandparents, the look in their eyes when they see their grad, it’s just really special to see how much love and support our students have,” Faris said.

YOUTH COUNCIL

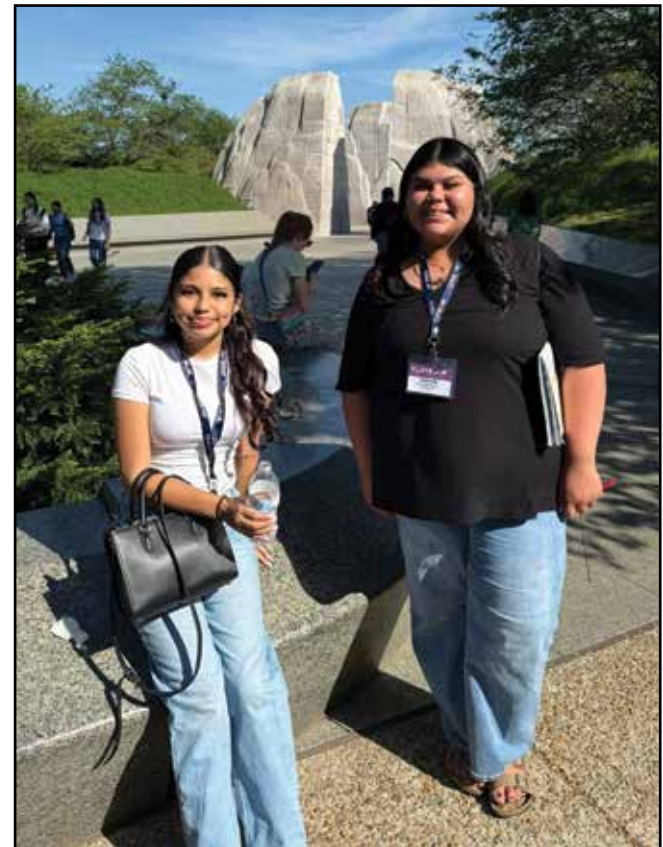
continued from pg. 5



Koneihii Sleeper, CAYC Vice-President and Mya Levi, CAYC Female Co-President.



Malaina Byrd, CAYC Hammon Representative.



CAYC members Amerie Sam and Maelee Whiteman-Morton.

CAYC Female Co-President Mya Levi said the program provided valuable insight into tribal government and citizen action. She highlighted her group’s project on education quality, which included personal experiences, data, and policy recommendations. “I have made a lot of new friends and connections while learning so many things from this program,” Levi said.

For many students, the trip exceeded expectations. Ryliegh Burns shared that the experience changed her perspective on government and Native issues. “It definitely helped me understand more about the politics and how we can make our voices heard,” she said.

Justyn “Smoke” Hawk, CAYC treasurer, expressed appreciation for the opportunity and those who made the trip possible. He highlighted the importance of stepping out of your comfort zones and gaining leadership experience, as well as the pride he felt seeing Native representation in national museums.

Shannon Russell reflected on her group’s work addressing MMIP and the importance of improving resources for Native communities. She also valued the opportunity to speak with U.S. senators and legislators and visit national landmarks, including the Lincoln Memorial.

CAYC Male Co-President Bryce Black described the summit as a busy but rewarding experience. He noted that students presented on tribal history and policy initiatives, including the BADGES for Native Americans Act, and participated in workshops, a banquet, and closing activities.

Koneihii Sleeper, CAYC vice president, shared that the program helped him build communication skills and confidence. From participating in workshops to presenting on poverty in Native communities, he said the experience was both educational and enjoyable.

Overall, CAYC members described the Close Up Native Youth Summit as an impactful and inspiring



CYAC members Shannon Russell, Sophia Plentybears, Bryce Black, Amber Beard and Native youth Leilani from Arizona.

opportunity. Through hands-on learning, cultural exchange, and civic engagement, students strengthened their leadership skills and gained a deeper understanding of how they can advocate for their communities.

91-Year-Old Elder Stays Active Through Tribal Wellness Program

Rosemary Stephens, *Editor-in-Chief*

At 91 years old, tribal elder Jim Archer isn't slowing down ... he's working toward getting back in the saddle.

Archer, who celebrated his 91st birthday on March 7, approaches each day with determination and a clear goal in mind: to ride his horse again. For him, age truly is just a number.

"I was going to physical therapy out at El Reno IHS to build up my strength," Archer said. "After so long you get kicked out because you can only go for so long. My physical therapist, Jordyn Long, took it upon herself to reach out to the tribes' Diabetes Wellness Program and got me referred."

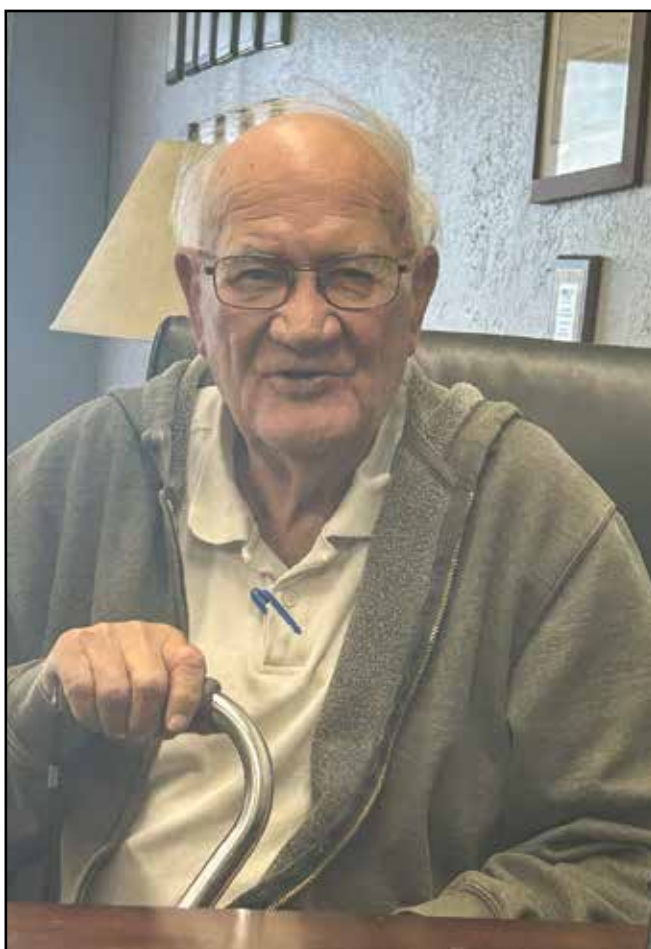
That referral opened the door to a new routine at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Diabetes Wellness Center in Concho, where Archer now works out three days a week, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

"It's ridiculous to have this nice facility out at Concho and not use it," Archer said. "Not just the older ones like me, but young ones too, to stay in shape and stay healthy and mobile."

At the center, Archer trains under the guidance of staff, including Diabetes Wellness Program Director Marcos Baros and fitness trainer Kyle Gilbert. Together, they've developed a personalized fitness plan focused on rebuilding strength, balance and mobility.

"My routine is 10 minutes on the bicycle, then three sets of squats, three sets for each leg, band stretching, and then side stepping, three sets of 10," Archer explained. "I finish it up with six minutes on the treadmill. Each week I increase the treadmill by one minute."

Every movement has a purpose. According to Baros, Archer's plan is designed with a single goal in mind.



Jim Archer turned 91 in March 2026. He isn't letting a number keep him from living his best life. Archer is a former educator and previously worked in the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes' Dept. of Education.

"The routine is based off his sole goal, which is to get on and off his horse again," Baros said. "That means focusing on leg strength and hip mobility."

The Diabetes Wellness Center offers a full-service workout facility with state-of-the-art equipment and one-on-one training support. The program itself is part of a broader collaboration between the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and the El Reno Indian Health Service, providing referrals for weight loss, physical activity and health coaching. It also supports patients like Archer who are continuing care after physical therapy.

Baros said Archer's commitment stands out.

"When I was referred to him, I was very impressed that at that age he is still exercising and has a goal in mind," Baros said. "We love

to see it."

For Baros and his team, the mission goes beyond fitness, it's about community and longevity.

"My go-to when I talk to elders is, I'm being selfish, but we want you here for as long as we can have you here," Baros said. "So my staff does everything we can to ensure your health is high on your list of priorities."

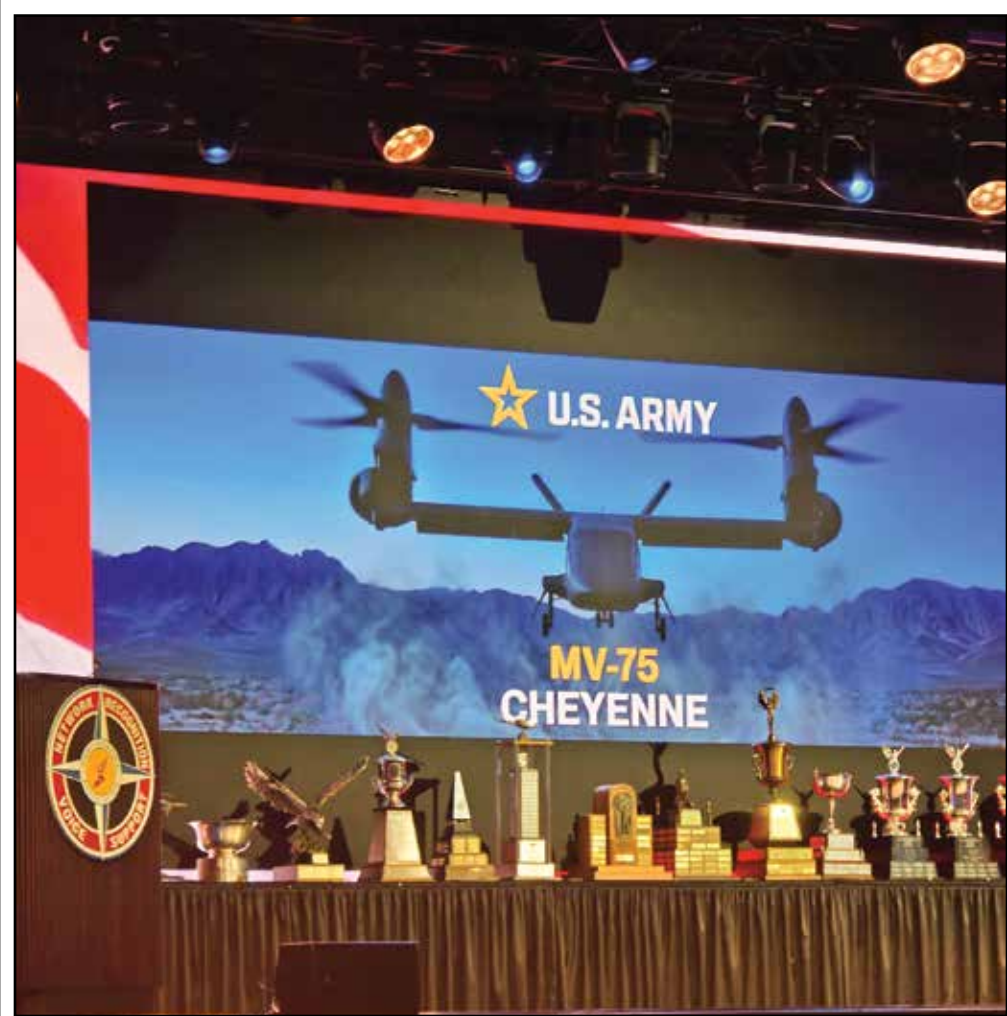
Archer hopes his story inspires others, especially fellow elders, to take that first step toward better health.

"People need to get off their butts and do something," he said with a laugh. "Seniors need to enjoy each day and stay active."

With each workout, Archer moves closer to his goal, proving that determination, support and community can carry a person far at any age.

CHEYENNE II

continued from pg. 1



complexity and shortens response times during a crisis.

The Army went through a deliberate process in evaluating more than 500 Native American tribes and found that the MV-75's speed, range, and adaptability mirrored the historical attributes of the Cheyenne tribes.

The name of the MV-75 Cheyenne II "reflects more than heritage - it reflects identity," said Ingraham. "The Cheyenne people represent a resilient warrior culture and embody the key attributes of the MV-75 - speed, reach, lethality, and adaptability."

The Cheyenne people inhabited the Great Plains for 400 years, adapting to a harsh and unforgiving environment as highly proficient hunters and gatherers. Their way of life required constant mobility, organized around nomadic buffalo hunting, enabling them to assemble, disassemble, and move quickly to meet the demands of their environment.

"In many aspects, that same ability to rapidly organize, reposition, and operate with precision is reflected in the MV-75 platform," Ingraham said.

Today, the Cheyenne are represented by the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in Montana and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes in Oklahoma, whose legacy reflects a proud and enduring warrior tradition ground in protection, provision and leadership. Their spirit of mobility, resilience, and disciplined strength is what the name Cheyenne II represents.

The name was previously used in the late 1960s for the AH-56 Cheyenne, an advanced, high-speed attack

helicopter. Although that program did not proceed, its legacy of innovation and speed continues with the new tiltrotor platform.

The rollout took place today at the Army Aviation Association of America's Army Aviation Warfighting Summit in Nashville, Tennessee. Speaking to journalists, including TWZ, before that event, Maj. Gen. Clair A. Gill, the commanding general of the Army Aviation Center and Portfolio Acquisition Executive — Expanded Maneuver Air, announced the MV-75's rollout as "a pivotal moment for Army Aviation, for our soldiers."

In keeping with other Army rotorcraft, the MV-75's name also honors a Native American tribe (more accurately, two tribes), the Cheyenne.

As Maj. Gen. Gill explained: "This name reflects more than heritage. It reflects identity. The Cheyenne people inhabited the Great Plains for 400 years, adapting to a harsh and unforgiving environment as highly proficient hunters and gatherers. Their way of life required constant mobility, organized around nomadic buffalo hunting, enabling them to assemble, disassemble, and move quickly to meet the demands of their environment. In many aspects, that same ability to rapidly organize, reposition, and operate with precision is reflected in the MV-75 platform."

"Life in that environment demanded resilience and strength," Gill continued. "Tribes navigated rivalries, dirt, conflict, and adapted as Westward expansion reshaped the landscape around them. Today, the Cheyenne

are represented by the Northern Cheyenne tribe in Montana, in the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes in Oklahoma, whose legacy reflects the proud and enduring warrior tradition, ground and protection, provision and leadership. Those values demand capability, and in today's fight, that capability comes in the form of speed, range, lethality, and adaptability. That spirit of mobility, resilience, and disciplined strength is what the name Cheyenne II represents."

The MV-75 Cheyenne II is also the very first entirely new platform that has been introduced into the Army inventory since the 1980s, representing a quantum leap ahead in technology.

"It not only enhances the lethality but also revolutionizes our aircraft design and construction through the advanced open architecture and model-based systems engineering," said Maj. Gen. Clair Gill, Portfolio Acquisition Executive for Maneuver Air.

Ingraham said this aircraft will transform Army aviation and more importantly, it will give our Soldiers the decisive advantage they need to fight and win on today's and tomorrow's battlefield.

"The MV-75 is a transformational aircraft that will provide our Joint Force with unparalleled versatility to dominate a wide array of mission sets," said Col. Jeffrey Poquette, Project Manager for the MV-75 Cheyenne II. "We are honored to have the Cheyenne tribes' approval to use their name, which embodies the power of this aircraft."



Cheyenne and Arapaho Housing Authority

2026 Elder Lawn Care Service

The Cheyenne and Arapaho Housing Authority Elder Lawn Care Service will be accepting applications April 20, 2026 - June 30, 2026. This will be a first come first serve due to limited funds

Eligibility Requirements

- Applicant must be an enrolled Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal member.
- Reside in the home that is receiving lawn care services.
- Be 55 years or older.
- Reside in Housings Service area (Beckham, Blaine, Canadian, Custer, Dewey, Ellis, Kingfisher, Major, Roger Mills, Washita, and Woodward counties).
- **DID NOT RECEIVE** a lawn mower in 2024 from the Housing Authority.

How to Apply

- Complete a Cheyenne and Arapaho Housing Authority Elder Lawn Service application.
- Provide a copy of the following documentation:
 - Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal CDIB
 - Proof of residency - Utility bill under applicants name.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Applications will be available Monday, April 20, 2026, at the Housing Authority front office and online at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal website under Housing.

For additional questions or information, please contact the Cheyenne and Arapaho Housing Authority at (580)331-2400 or Fax# (405)422-8271

PUBLIC NOTICE: CONCHO AGENCY

Concho Agency is excited to share that we have recently streamlined our communication channels by unifying our telephone and email services. This upgrade is designed to make it easier for everyone to connect and collaborate, ensuring faster responses and a more seamless experience when reaching out with questions or concerns.

Landowners now have several convenient options to contact the Agency. For those who prefer phone communication, they can reach the Agency directly using the soft line feature via Microsoft Teams at 405-452-2414, which offers the familiar automated choices for both Management and Realty matters.

For specific inquiries, two dedicated email addresses are available: Concho_Agency_Probate_Office@BIA.gov for Probate-related questions and Concho_Agency_Realty@BIA.gov for Realty issues.

Should you have any questions or need assistance navigating the new system, please don't hesitate to contact us. Our team is committed to making this transition as smooth and beneficial as possible for everyone.

Happy Birthday
Mikah Ray Palmer
May 15

My baby son, my youngest baby! Happy Birthday son big "II" have the best day ever, always on my mind forever in my heart baby son. Momma loves you to the moon and back, to infinity and beyond. Big hugs and kisses son.
Love, mom Leah Cometsevah



On April 17, 2026, Charles Birdshhead and Sheena Sockabasin became Mr. and Mrs. Birdshhead in Springfield, South Dakota. "I pray for blessings upon this bond we create to be fulfilled throughout our lives."

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EDITORIAL: Facing Trauma, Finding Hope: A Call to Community Healing

By Roy Espy, former director of TB Ferguson Museum

I attended recent Native American Generational workshop at the Lucky Star Casino in Watonga, Okla. At the bottom of the agenda for the workshop was a quote from White Buffalo Woman, "Understanding is a wonderful thing". This underscores the mission and purpose of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe people with this conference, "Understanding" is a basic element to all successful and productive human interactions. If we can't understand each other, we can't communicate meaningfully.

The mission of this conference is "Recognizing, Healing, Connecting and Addressing Generational Trauma" by bringing people from the community, across the spectrum, to share their stories, experiences. Most of all the "Resources" to help with the trauma effecting the lives of the people in our community. All People.

The question I ask myself and you should ask yourself as well is, "How much Trauma am I living with"? It's naive to believe that we have not been affected by trauma or living currently with trauma, generational or otherwise. We are a broken people in a broken community. This workshop's goal is to begin addressing this issue, this need.

Why here and why now? For me to make sense of this I have go to, who? That is the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nation. Leaders in this community have shared with me their vision to build something, a hospital, a network, a place to bring healing, not only to themselves but to those whom they live amongst. They are doing this with the "Opposite" spirit that brought them here.

The Strauss-Howe generational theory may apply in some way to this. This theory states that history and social changes happen in 80-year cycles. This is a wonderful rabbit hole to wander down, but not today. The crayon explanation is that society changes every 80 years, and I think somewhere in this theory is the "Why Now". I think the "Why here" is irrelevant, I'm just happy it is here and somehow, I'm a part of it. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Nation, its people and its leaders are and have stepped-up and taken lead in healing generational and non-generational trauma. Substance abuse, domestic violence and physical abuse.

What has been started is open to everyone, you don't have to be native. You don't even have to have been a train wreck once in your life to participate. An open mind will be helpful. The next workshop will be November 18 and 19 later this year. This workshop will be focused on the customs, and traditional healing methods given to the indigenous people by their ancestors, a non-pharmaceutical path.

All of this isn't going to fix the world but together lets changes some lives here in Watonga then work on the bigger picture. There is a long-term dream to build a first-class mental health facility with a campus in north-west Oklahoma to address the needs of the community. Find out how to help with this, it's never too early or too late to be involved. "Understanding is a wonderful thing".



Scan QR Code to download the Tribal Tribune on any mobile device



CONGRATULATIONS:
El Reno High School Senior Juliana Thomas commits to Connors State College to continue her basketball journey.

Thomas was born and raised in the El Reno, Okla., community, growing up playing basketball. Standing 5'2, Thomas has played point guard for the El Reno High



School girls' basketball program and was part of their back-to-back state championships. Thomas maintains a 3.8 GPA and is excited to continue her education and basketball journey at Connors State College in the Fall 2026.

Thomas's parents are Hanna Prairie Chief and Denton Thomas. Her grandparents are Simona Foreman and Duke Thomas, Theresa Tsoodle and Charles Prairie Chief. Juliana's siblings include James Blackowl and Arya Eaglenest.



Congratulations to Darlington Public School's ORES Division II State Champions:
Jeffrey Elizondo- ORES Division 2 State Champion in the 800 M Run and 1600 M Run
Mason Beartrack- ORES Division 2 State Champion in the High Jump
D'Michael Elledge- ORES Division 2 State Runner-Up in the Shot Put

Gina Aranda
(580)302-0752

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Minimum Requirements: must be 21 years or older, high school diploma or G.E.D., w/valid Oklahoma Class D driver's license. Must be insurable & pass a pre-hire drug screen. \$16/hour; benefits include health, dental and vision insurance, vacation and sick leave and 401K retirement plan.

Apply at www.cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov/careers. For more information or questions email CATT at transit@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov or call 580-331-2600.

NOTICE: BIA CONCHO AGENCY PHONE NUMBER CHANGE

NEW MAIN LINE TELEPHONE NUMBER
405-452-2414

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY PLEASE USE OUR NEW NUMBER FOR ALL CALLS OR
EMAIL: Concho_Agency_Realty@bia.gov
or IA_Concho_Agency_Probate_Office@bia.gov

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CIV-2026-0014

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
FILED APR 20 2026
IN THE TRIAL COURT

DOCKET PAGE
FILM IMAGE
COURT CLERK DEPUTY

IN THE APPLICATION OF:)
E.T.W.) Case No: CIV-2026-0034
Minor Child)
To Change His/Her Name)
By Next of Kin)
Darney Sandy)

NOTICE OF CIVIL SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

TO: JALEN WILLIS
UNKNOWN ADDRESS

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO FILE A FORMAL WRITTEN ANSWER to the Petition which is filed in the Office of the above-named Court. A copy of the Petition is herewith served upon you and to file your Answer with the above-named Court within twenty (20) days of service of this summons, exclusive of the day of service. Within the same time, a copy of your Answer must be delivered or mailed to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court P.O. Box 102 Concho, OK, 73022.

AFTER THE TWENTY (20) days, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court shall set a date for a hearing of this cause, and you will be notified of the time and date.

IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR before the Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court on the date set for hearing, a Judgment by Default can be entered and the Plaintiff shall be awarded the relief asked for, in the Petition.

YOU MAY SEEK THE ADVICE OF AN ATTORNEY on any matter connected with this suit or your Answer at your own expense. Such Attorney should be consulted immediately so that an Answer may be filed within the time stated in the summons.

Dated this 20th day of April, 2025.

Lafreda Whitcrow, Chief Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

PETITIONER: DARNEY SANDY

JFD-2026-0007

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
FILED APR 14 2026
IN THE TRIAL COURT

DOCKET PAGE
FILM IMAGE
COURT CLERK DEPUTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE OF:)
RICKY ORLANDO CARRERA) Case No. JFD-2026-0007
and)
Petitioner,)
STASHA NICOLE CARRERA)
Respondent,)

CIVIL SUMMONS BY PUBLICATION

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES TO: STASHA NICOLE CARRERA
Address Unknown

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO FILE A FORMAL WRITTEN ANSWER to the Petition which is filed in the Office of the above-named Court. A copy of the Petition is available through the Court Clerk's office and to file your Answer with the above-named Court within twenty (20) days of service of this summons, exclusive of the day of service. Within the same time, a copy of your Answer must be delivered or mailed to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court P.O. Box 102 Concho, OK, 73022.

AFTER THE TWENTY (20) days, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court shall set a date for hearing of this cause, and you will be notified of the time and date.

IF YOU FAIL TO APPEAR before the Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court on the date set for hearing, a Judgment by Default can be entered and the Plaintiff shall be awarded the relief asked for, in the Petition.

YOU MAY SEEK THE ADVICE OF AN ATTORNEY on any matter connected with this suit or your Answer at your own expense. Such Attorney should be consulted immediately so that an Answer may be filed within the time stated in this summons.

Dated this 14th day of APRIL, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

PG-2026-0017

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
FILED APR 16 2026
IN THE TRIAL COURT

DOCKET PAGE
FILM IMAGE
COURT CLERK DEPUTY

IN THE MATTER OF THE GUARDIANSHIP OF:)
LOUISE WHITE EAGLE) Case No. PG-2026-0017
DOB: 08/31/1943)

An Alleged Incapacitated Person,

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: ANY INTERESTED PARTIES

TAKE NOTICE that Beatrice Fignernall, has filed in this Court a Petition for Guardianship, and is hereby set for a Hearing to be heard by the Cheyenne-Arapaho Trial Court of Concho, Oklahoma in the Courtroom located at 100 W. Black Kettle Boulevard, P.O. Box 102, Concho, Oklahoma, on the 2nd day of JUNE, 2026 at 10:00 A.M. at which time you may appear and show cause, if any you have, why said relief should not be granted.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR on the above date and time indicated for the presentation of your case before the above-entitled Trial Court. You have the option to appear in person or through Zoom. To appear via Zoom, you will need a smart device such as a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone. Your smart device will need a camera, microphone, and a stable internet connection. If you do not have access to a smart device, you can use a non-smartphone or traditional telephone.

Parties must use the following in order to log in or join the meeting.

- Video conferencing for smart device users:
 - Zoom link: <https://us01web.zoom.us/j/4524251494?pwd=SkRCUzUwVWVlOFlhMjI0RkxkTGtUOTQ0Z0pMc0p1>
 - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
 - Passcode: Court2021
- Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:
 - Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799
 - Meeting ID: 452 425 1494
 - Passcode: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 16th day of April, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

OBITUARIES

OBITUARIES

Erma Jean (Wallace) Brown

Erma Jean Wallace-Brown was born on March 23, 1933, in her grandmother Clara Thunder's home in Geary, Okla., and passed away April 16, 2026, in the River Valley Nursing Home in Clinton, Okla. She was the daughter of Leslie Gould and Katherine (Wallace), both enrolled citizens of the Southern Arapaho Tribe.

At the age of 6, Erma was taken from her grandmother's home by an Indian Agent and sent to Concho Indian School, where she attended for 12 years and graduated from high school. Despite the challenges of that experience, she carried forward a quiet strength and resilience that would define her life.

Following her graduation, Erma moved to the Pikes Peak area of Colorado, where she worked at a tourist attraction promoting Native American awareness. During that time, she met a soldier stationed at Fort Carson, and the two were united in marriage. Their union was blessed with three sons and one daughter. Over the course of 22 years, Erma faithfully supported her husband's military career, living in Germany and in several states across the United States.

Wherever life took her, Erma gave generously of herself. She volunteered with the American Red Cross and Army Community Service, where she became known for her kindness, compassion, and steady presence. She offered comfort and care to young soldiers and their families who were far from home,

often becoming a source of strength and reassurance during difficult times.

After her marriage ended, Erma moved to Oregon to be near family and began a 30-year career at Chemawa Indian School in Salem, Oregon, serving as a Dormitory Attendant. There, she continued her life's work of caring for others, dedicating herself to the well-being of Native American students. Her gentle spirit, nurturing heart, and unwavering support left a lasting impression on countless young people.

After 30 years of devoted federal service with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Erma retired and returned to Oklahoma. She lived in El Reno for several years before later making her home at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Independent Living Center in Clinton.

Erma raised her children to be independent, strong, and confident. Her eldest son, Armor D. Brown, preceded her in death on Dec. 8, 2025. Her son, Robert Brown, resides in Milwaukee, WI, her youngest son Mark Brown, resides in Alabama and her daughter, Sonja Fry resides in Clinton.

Erma was also blessed with 11 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren, all of whom she loved dearly.

Throughout her life, Erma always spoke of her grandmother, Clara Thunder, as "the one who raised me." Though Katherine Nichols was her birth mother, the two remained connected over the years and shared many life experiences. Erma was the



eldest of 11 siblings and the only child born to Katherine Nichols and Leslie Gould. Her family roots extended between Geary and Ethete, Wyoming, reflecting her Northern and Southern Arapaho heritage. She is survived by many brothers and sisters, along with extended family members who will cherish her memory.

Erma will be remembered for her gentle kindness, her sensitivity to others, and her willingness to help anyone in need. She truly embodied love in action. She found joy in caring for others, spending time with her family, taking her daily walks, and relaxing with a glass of wine in the evenings.

She was a remarkable woman whose life was defined by compassion, strength, and quiet generosity. She will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved her.

A family private wake service was held by the family. Funeral services were held April 24 at the Clinton Emergency Response Center in Clinton, Okla., officiated by Rev. Gerald Panana under the direction of Lee Hometown Funeral Home.

Douglas Martin-Jordan Blackbear

Douglas Martin-Jordan Blackbear, age 23, of Longview, Texas, was born April 16, 2002, in Oklahoma City, to John Paul Blackbear and Quiana McCloud. He passed away April 8, 2026, in Longview, Texas.

Douglas was raised in Oklahoma City and attended Ridgewood Elementary and Quail Creek Elementary Schools before graduating from Gladewater High School in 2023. During his school years, Douglas made a lasting impression on those around him with his joyful spirit and genuine personality. He formed meaningful connections with classmates, teachers, and caregivers who will always remember his smile.

Douglas found happiness in the simple things in life. He loved spending time on his tablet, riding school buses, watching SpongeBob SquarePants, and listening to Native American Church songs. Music brought him comfort and peace, and it was something he deeply enjoyed. He had a playful sense of humor and a contagious laugh, especially when he knew someone nearby might be getting into trouble, those moments brought him great amusement.

His favorite colors were red and yellow, bright and bold, much like his personality. Douglas attended proudly with tow dates, crowned Prom King, a reflection of how much he was loved and celebrated by his peers. Those moments were special not only to him, but

to everyone who shared in his joy.

Douglas had a tender and expressive nature. When he felt shy, embarrassed, or upset, he would gently hide behind his forearm, a gesture those close to him came to understand as part of who he was. He had a special fondness for his nurses and caregivers, often charming them with his playful personality and warm spirit.

Family meant everything to Douglas. He shared a deep and loving bond with his father, and his family recalls how his face would light up the moment his dad entered the room. That connection was one of pure love and brought him great comfort and happiness.

Douglas will be remembered as a bright light, a young man who brought laughter, love, and unforgettable moments to those around him. Though his time here was far too short, the joy he gave and the memories he created will live on in the hearts of all who knew him.

He was preceded in death by his grandmothers - Kimberly Kay Thomas, Patricia Ann Johnson, Carolyn Mitchell, Rosenda Marie (April) Peshlakai, Imogene Blackbear, Frances (Blackbear) Doctor, Roberta Ann (Blackbear) Osage and great-grandmother Stella Bessie (RomanNose) Blackbear. His grandfathers-Anthony Douglas (RomanNose) Tau, Alvin Slivers, Fred Slivers and great grandfathers -Eugene Blackbear, Sr. Albert James Slivers Sr. (Navajo Code



Talker), Hola Tso, Arthurell Thomas and his uncle, Henry "Hank" Martin Blackbear and aunt, Marilyn Louise Osage.

Douglas Martin is survived by his parents - John Blackbear and Quiana McCloud, his sisters-Amanda Nasbah (Blackbear) Harrison of Ft. Yates, ND & Danielle Makea Johnna Blackbear of Oklahoma City, his brothers-D'Erik Ta'Vian Nelson of Dallas TX, Dwayne Toretto Nelson of Colorado Springs CO. His aunts- Frances Blackbear, Amanda Blackbear, Lauren Johnson, and his uncle Erick Johnson and his paternal grandparents- Ralph and Senoria Blackbear, along with many extended family members and loved ones who will continue to cherish his memory.

Wake services were held April 11 at the Watonga Emergency Response Center in Watonga, Okla. Funeral services were held April 12, 2026, at the same venue, officiated by Jason Goodblanket, followed by an interment at the Blackbear Family Cemetery under the direction of Lee Hometown Funeral Home.

Addie Jo Tohee

Addie Jo Tohee of Red Rock, Okla., was born on Dec. 9, 1953, in Oklahoma City, and passed away on April 20, 2026, in Tulsa, Okla.

Addie Jo was born to Merle Everett Sweezy and Flora Luna Cline. Although Addie Jo was an enrolled citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribe, she was a descendant of the Otoe-Missouria Tribe and was raised within the Otoe-Missouria community. She is a descendant of the Carson family and the Beaver Clan. Addie Jo attended Mesa Community College and Meridian Technology. Addie Jo was a sous chef. She was raised by her Aunt Kate Carson Roberts, as well as by her older sister Della Warrior and Della's husband, Clyde Warrior. Under their influence, she became involved in the Civil Rights Movement at a very early age. Addie Jo attended many marches, walks, and demonstrations and had ties to the American Indian Movement.

Addie Jo loved to cook for her family and everyone she loved. She loved to paint, share stories and take

pictures. Addie Jo had a giving and forgiving heart. She attended the Otoe Baptist Church and she loved the Lord. She enjoyed being with her children and grandchildren, family and friends.

Addie Jo is survived by her children, Brad Childs, Theresa Tohee, Meta Tohee, Shawn "Pawnee" Tohee, and Endonnis Tohee. Grandchildren, Bethanny Childs, Braden Childs, Kyla Warrior, Jana Warrior, Kirklyn Warrior, Bonnie Childs, Audrina Jefferson, JoAnna Warrior, Kindall "Fritz" Warrior, Damian Buffalohead, Daxton Buffalohead, Marley Buffalohead, and Keith "KJ" Buffalohead. Great Grandchildren, Jeri Childs, Adelina Warrior-Lawson, Annahlee Warrior, Athena Warrior, and one on the way. Siblings, Della Warrior, Ellen Sweezy, Michael Sweezy, Charles Sweezy, Jimmy Cline, Stevie Cline, George Cline, and Frank Carson. Special Friends, Mae LeClair, Elizabeth Arkeketa, Wosey Butler, Victoria Koshiway, Mom Ferb Botone, Marjorie Borst, Anita Johnson Chase, and Marge Barry; and many rela-



tives from the Carson Family, many people whom she considered her nieces, nephews, and grandchildren.

Addie Jo is preceded in death by her parents, her children's father Vernon G. Tohee, siblings, Donna Sweezy Rush, Ronnie Sweezy, and Joseph Cline, grandson Jansen Todd Warrior II, Indian Friend, Earlene Ely; niece Kristal Cline, nephew Anthony Sweezy.

Wake services were held April 22 at the Otoe Baptist Church in Red Rock, Okla. Funeral services were held April 23, at the same venue, with Pastor Jimmy Kenner officiating, followed by an interment at the Otoe-Missouria Tribal Cemetery.

Betty Lynn Blackwolf

Betty Lynn Blackwolf was born on Dec. 17, 1960, in Oklahoma City, to Donald Blackwolf and Betty Lou (Redbuffalo) White. She peacefully passed away in her home surrounded by her loved ones in El Reno, Okla. after a long battle with cancer.

Betty Lynn, a cherished grandmother, loved and cherished each of her grandchildren. She spent her long years in El Reno, where she dedicated her life to her work. Her career included many years at the Clinton IHS and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. Betty Lynn graduated from Arapaho High School in 1979 and continued her education at Redlands Community College.

Basketball was a special passion for Betty Lynn. She grew up playing for the Arapaho Indians and remained a devoted fan of the Oklahoma City Thunder. She loved Shai! SGA! Betty Lynn had such a wide range of interests! She loved going to movies, exploring thrift stores, going out dining with loved ones, and checking out garage sales. Plus, she really enjoyed listening

to her favorite old-school music.

Having her grandchildren brought Betty Lynn so much happiness. She especially loved visiting her mother in Arapaho, Okla., where she was raised, and going on trips to Albuquerque, N.M.

Betty Lynn's love, humor, unique personality, and kindness will be deeply missed. May she find eternal rest.

She is preceded in death by her husband Ricky Charles Brown, her father Donald "Gene" Blackwolf, her other father Billy Joe White, her brother William "Mike" White, her daughter Deven Renee Blackwolf Johnson and her grandson Jose Rupert Luis Baxcajay.

She is survived by her mother Betty Lou (Redbuffalo) White, her sons, Daniel Blackwolf and Marvin Twins Sr., both of El Reno, her daughters, Jamyne Lynn Blackwolf of Oklahoma City, Michelle Twins of El Reno, JoNita Lynne and her husband Darvis Raney of Oklahoma City; and her grandchildren, a total of 34, along with eight great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her brothers, Daniel and



his wife Diane Blackwolf of Clinton, Okla., Donny and his wife Anna Blackwolf of Clinton, Jackie Hunter of Lawton, Okla., Tim Moneta-chi, her sisters, Karen Blackwolf of Clinton, Danielle Blackwolf and her husband Fritz Pedro of Yukon, Okla., Kerrie Blackwolf of El Reno, Kellie Blackwolf of Oklahoma City; Sheri Snake Perez of Thomas, Okla., Tracy White of Arapaho, Queena Hart and many nieces and nephews.

An all-night wake service was held April 21 at the Concho Emergency Response Center in Concho, Okla. Funeral services were held April 22, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Concho Indian Cemetery under the direction of Huber Benson Funeral Home.

Kamden Ray Orange

Kamden Ray Orange, precious infant son of Karlana Orange and Keaton Aday, was born on April 17, 2025, in Elk City, Okla., and passed peacefully into the arms of Jesus later that same day at Great Plains Regional Medical Center.

Though Kamden's time on this earth was brief, he was deeply loved and cherished from the very beginning. In his short life, he brought a lifetime of love to his family, leaving a lasting imprint on their hearts that will never fade. His presence, though fleeting, will forever be remembered as a beautiful and meaningful blessing.

Kamden is lovingly sur-

vived by his mother Karlana Orange of the home in Hammon, and his father Keaton Aday of Lawton, his sisters, Kehlani Grace and Justice Nadine, his brothers, Kristopher Lee and Joseph Keanu, all of the home, his paternal grandmother, Kimberly Wallace of Lawton, and his maternal grandmother Sarah Orange of Hammon. He is also remembered by extended family members who share in the sorrow of his passing and the love of his memory.

Though his life was measured in moments, Kamden Ray Orange will be forever loved, forever missed, and forever a part of those who hold him close in their hearts.



A private family wake was held April 23 at Lee Hometown Funeral Home. Grave-side services were held April 24, 2026, at Hammon Mennonite Cemetery, officiated by Rev. Gerald Panana, under the direction of Lee Hometown Funeral Home.

Patrick James Hamilton

Patrick James Hamilton was born on July 12, 1954, in Kingfisher, Okla. He went home April 8, 2026, to be with his parents, Albert and Esther Hamilton, sister Shirley Hamilton, brothers, Junior Master Hamilton and Paul Joseph Hamilton and daughter Marianne Hamilton.

Baptized at a young age, Patrick since traveled many miles and accomplished many tasks throughout his life. He was a father like no other, who created his family to begin with the fire in his heart and allowed it to continue to flow throughout his life.

Patrick attended Haskell and Okmulgee College. He was a Wildland firefighter for 25 years, crew boss trainee, sawyer, all out navigator, security, and jack of all trades. He loved his jobs and the people he met along the way. Although he had many tasks, he enjoyed the sights and scenery throughout his life.

He helped a lot of people and was blessed with grandkids that he held close to his heart. He inspired many generations to come. He lived a generous life at his place of residence in Elk City, Okla.

He is survived by his sisters, June and Katie Hamil-



ton, and his daughters, Shayla, Kristy, and Jan.

Wake services were held April 15 at the Kingfisher Emergency Response Center in Kingfisher, Okla. Funeral services were held April 16, at the same venue under the direction of Sanders Funeral Home.

ATHLETES' SPOTLIGHT

By Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

Hector Ochoa-Whitebird, Southeast High School

Progressing over the years as a runner and pouring his heart out on the terrain with each mile, tribal youth Hector Ochoa-Whitebird, 18, looked forward to his senior year and seeing how far he can push his limitations this season.

Born and raised in Oklahoma City, Ochoa-Whitebird participates on the track and cross-country team at Southeast High School, where he competes in the 400m and 800m events as well as the 4x800m and 4x400m relays.

When Ochoa-Whitebird first began track in the eighth grade, he was searching for the sport that fit him the best. When he was trying out other sports like basketball and soccer, he found his passion was running.

"I decided to do track and I found it really awesome and cool, in your progression throughout like high school or even middle school, so I really like doing track, it's pretty cool," Ochoa-Whitebird said.

And progression is what Ochoa-Whitebird has come to love the most about running track and how he's progressed.

"Seeing how fast or how over time you develop in the sport, I like the environment as well, it's like really close together, it's really just like a family."

Ochoa-Whitebird's motivation for continuing to stay in track has been his teammates and coach, along with motivating himself. What he looks forward to the most in

his senior year of track season his breaking the 4x400m relay record and to hopefully make it to state, as they did not have a 4x400m team last year. His overall goals for the season are to stick out the season and to have fun.

"Just to stick it out and have fun, to make state in the 4x4 with my teammates, that'll probably be my only goal," Ochoa-Whitebird said.

However, what Ochoa-Whitebird hoped to accomplish overall in running is to jump down on his running time.

"To get a faster time and then place higher at like big meets, track meets and cross country," Ochoa-Whitebird said.

As a runner, Ochoa-Whitebird feels he's grown the most as a person as he's had highs and lows on and off the track field.

"You have highs and lows, but you also have highs, like personal and like in real life, I would say you definitely have setbacks as well in track like from injuries, you also have set backs in real life, like depression, you can obviously get back up from it and same thing with the injury," Ochoa-Whitebird said.

Staying fit for track, Ochoa-Whitebird is training five days a week, weightlifting two to four times a week while also going to the gym

on his own to work on cross country training.

"I go to the gym on my own to do cross-country training, which is like biking or elliptical, or even like lifting weights in general just to stay fit for track, getting stronger for track it's like a huge thing, I'll say to prevent injury," Ochoa-Whitebird said.

What Ochoa-Whitebird is working on the most this season is consistency in all aspects, showing up for practice and communicating with others.

While staying consistent, Ochoa-Whitebird has managed to maintain a 3.0 GPA in academics.

"I try my best to go to school so I can own my sport, after school if I didn't do an assignment, I would probably go home and study on it and I'm going to complete it before the following day," Ochoa-Whitebird said.

As a runner, Ochoa-Whitebird believes it's important to have discipline and to have consistency in track.

"You've got to have consistency in track because if you miss a day, then it's hard to gain back that one day in track and it's hard to say consistent, but once you start staying consistent you start getting better and better," Ochoa-Whitebird said.

With his final season of high school track ending,



Ochoa-Whitebird hopes to be remembered as the hardworking teammate when the season ends.

"I feel like they already see me as a hardworking teammate, especially my coaches, they say that every single time, I definitely became one of the fastest people on the team, from one of the slowest, or maybe like the mid. But I don't quit, I'm still there, still show up to work hard and I hope to be remembered as the hard worker," Ochoa-Whitebird said.

Ochoa-Whitebird committed to Southwestern Christian University in Bethany, Okla., to continue Track and Cross-Country after graduation.

Hector's parents are Kimberly Whitebird and Hector Ochoa. His great grandmother is Ernestine Whitebird, grandmother is Etheleen Whitebird and grandfather is Malcolm Whitebird Jr. His siblings include Darrence Alexander, Mauricio Ochoa-Whitebird and Estrella Ochoa-Whitebird.



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