

Oklahoma Native American students ranked first in the nation in reading and math, but funding cuts could change that

Brenna Witchey, Oklahoma Watch

Before the school supply pick-up at the Mustang Conference Center even started, children of all ages and their families were streaming through the door.

Volunteers directed them toward the check-in desk, away from the table of distracting colorful backpacks with stacks of school supplies behind them.

The supplies pick-up was organized and funded by the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ Johnson-O’Malley Office. Students signed in, then received a backpack, school supplies for their grade, snacks and a JOM T-shirt.

Most of the stations were staffed by volunteers. Some hustled to replenish backpacks as they quickly disappeared off the table; others

highlighted names at check in or handed out shirts.

School supply pick-ups like this are just one of the supplemental education programs that the Johnson-O’Malley (JOM) fund supports.

JOM grants come from congressional appropriations. The money is managed and distributed by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

The money also supports programs providing cultural and language enrichment, academic support and drop-out prevention.

Oklahoma Native American students receive more Title VI and JOM funding than those in any other state. They

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Star Yellowfish, director of Native American student services for Oklahoma City Public Schools (left), attends a powwow with students in 2025. (Photo courtesy of Oklahoma City Public Schools)

Cheyenne and Arapaho leadership attend Tribal Leadership Academy at Dartmouth College

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

Leading the way into a brighter future full of optimistic opportunities and facing daily tasks ahead in their respective roles, Dr. Carrie Whitlow and Sabrina Norris, who both serve as executive directors for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, attend Dartmouth College’s Tribal Leadership Academy (TLA) program.

The week-long TLA program for newly elected or appointed tribal leaders was held July 27-31 in Hanover, N.H. The TLA grew out of a broader proposal to create a Tribal Sovereignty Institute at Dartmouth produced by faculty of Native American and Indigenous Studies at Dartmouth and the Native alumni members of a presidential advisory body known as the Native American Visiting Committee.

Bruce Duthu, Chair of Native American and Indigenous Studies at Dartmouth College, said the TLA was designed as a proof of concept for the broader Institute to demonstrate the viability and importance of having Dartmouth become more directly engaged with tribal nations on issues of common concern.

“All of these initiatives build upon Dartmouth’s 1769 Charter from the British monarchy creating a school in New Hampshire dedicated to the education of the youth of Indian tribes,” Duthu said.

After successfully raising sufficient funds, the TLA first kicked off in 2024 and has since convened three sessions during the past three summers. The program has funding for up to 25 tribal leaders with a preference for newly elected or appointed tribal leaders to engage for a week with a slate of fac-



As part of team group activities, Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ Dept. of Administration Executive Director Sabrina Norris works together with a colleague during the Tribal Leadership Academy. (Photos courtesy of Dartmouth College)

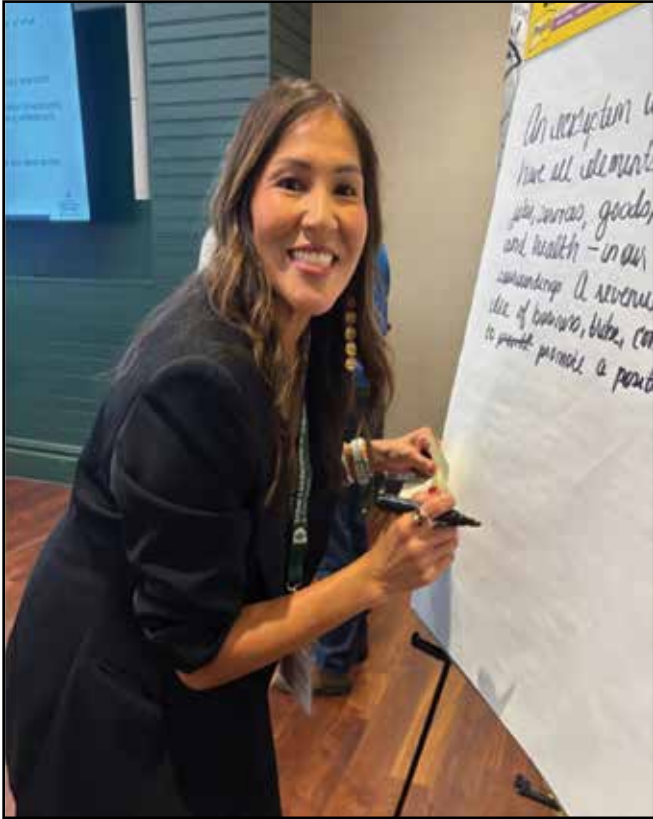
ulty presenters, each expert in their respective fields, on best governance practices in Indian Country.

The program allowed Whitlow and Norris to actively engage in group discussions, learn from faculty presenters and interactive sessions. Each of the sessions were relatively tied to Indian country and its unique challenges and opportunities that many face.

Topics for sessions included economic development, health care, grant writing and intergovernmental relations.

Meeting with other tribal leaders, Norris said they were able to discuss issues and opportunities they have at each of their tribes, working to find solutions, or some common ground.

In her daily role Norris is the executive director for the Cheyenne and Arapaho



Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ Dept. of Education Executive Director Dr. Carrie Whitlow works on an activity as part of the ongoing leadership training at the Tribal Leadership Academy held at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H.

Regular session of 11th Cheyenne and Arapaho Legislature to be held September 12

CONCHO, Okla. - Resolutions set to be voted on during the 11th Legislature’s Regular Session, Sept. 12, 2026, held in the large conference room located within the Dept. of Administration building in Concho, Okla.

A public hearing to discuss resolutions will be held 10 a.m. Thursday Sept. 10 in the large conference room within the Dept. of Administration building.

All resolutions can be read in their entirety by visiting www.cheyenneandrapaho-nsn.gov/government/legislative.

Resolution 11L-2026-09-001 – A Resolution to Appropriate Funds to the Food Pantry to Provide Services to Tribal Members that Reside Outside the State of Oklahoma, sponsored by Cheyenne District 1 Legislator Bruce Whiteman

Resolution 11L-2026-

09-002 – A Resolution to Authorize the submission of the application for the yearly Family Violence Prevention and Services Grant.

Resolution 11L-RS-2026-09-003 - A Resolution to approve the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan, Updates 1 and 2, as per TAM Rule, 49 CFR Part 625 and Authorize the Submission to Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

Resolution 11L-RS-2026-09-004 – A Resolution to Appropriate Funds to Clinton and Canton Head Starts, sponsored by Arapaho District 1 Legislator Pamela Sutton and Arapaho District 3 Legislator Travis Ruiz.

Resolution 11L-RS-2026-09-005 – A Bill to Enact the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Travel Act of 2026, sponsored by Arapaho District 3 Legislator Travis Ruiz.

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES

LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

Kendricks Sleeper, Speaker
Eleventh Legislature
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MONTHLY NOTICE

Ninth Regular Session
September 12, 2026
9:00 A.M.
LCR, Concho, Oklahoma

The Constitution of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Article VI, Section 3, subsection (a) reads in part: “The Legislature shall have the power to make laws and resolutions in accordance with the Constitution which are necessary and proper for the good of the Tribes.”

Article VI, Section 6, subsection (a) reads in part: “The Legislature shall convene in Concho for twelve Regular Sessions of up to two consecutive days beginning on the second Saturday of each month beginning at 9:00 am.”

Article VI, Section 7, subsection (a) (ii) reads in part: “All Bills shall be published in a legislative calendar for at least thirty days prior to action on the Bill. All Bills shall be made the subject of a public legislative hearing prior to action on the Bill.”

Regular Session Agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes for the Seventh Regular Session held on July 11, 2026.

2. Approval of the Minutes for the Eighth Regular Session held on August 8, 2026.

3. Approval of the Minutes for the Special Session held on July 27, 2026.

4. 11L-RS-2026-09-001 A Resolution to Appropriate Funds to the Food Pantry to Provide Services to Tribal Members that Reside Outside the state of Oklahoma.

5. 11L-RS-2026-09-002 A Resolution to Authorize the submission of the application for the yearly Family Violence Prevention and Services Grant.

6. 11L-RS-2026-09-003 A Resolution to approve the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ Transit Asset Management (TAM) Plan, Updates 1 and 2, as per TAM Rule, 49 CFR Part 625, and Authorize the Submission to Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

7. 11L-RS-2026-09-004 A Resolution Appropriating Funds to Clinton and Canton Headstart Programs.

8. 11L-RS-2026-09-005 A Bill to Enact the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Travel Act of 2026.

A1 – Pamela Sutton
A2 – Kendricks Sleeper
A3 – Travis Ruiz
A4 – Rector Candy

Eleventh Legislature

C1 – Bruce Whiteman, Jr.
C2 – Milan Roman Nose, Jr.
C3 – Thomas Trout
C4 – Mariah Youngbull

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Summer Youth Employment Program celebrates another successful year

Submitted by the DREAMS Program

Gratitude extended to tribal Leaders and employers

CONCHO, Okla. - The Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ Dept. of Labor DREAMS Program is celebrating another successful Summer Youth Employment Program year (SYEP), providing tribal youth with valuable work experience, career exploration opportunities, workforce development training, and professional certifications throughout the summer of 2026.

Throughout the summer, participants gained hands-on experience in a variety of industries while developing workplace responsibilities, communication skills, teamwork, leadership abilities and professional conduct. Many youth discovered new career interests and established valuable connections that will support their future educational and employment goals.

The program began with parent and youth orientation events in Watonga, Clinton, and Concho, Okla., where families completed onboarding requirements and learned about program expectations, workplace responsibilities, and available resources. DREAMS staff, along with tribal Personnel staff, worked closely with participants to ensure they were prepared for a successful summer employment experience.

A key component of the program was the comprehensive Work Readiness Training held at Canadian Valley Technology Center in El Reno. Participants received instruction in financial literacy, workplace expectations, communication skills, wellness, leadership development, and tribal government operations. Youth also earned valuable certifications, including First Aid/CPR and Food Handlers Certification, while older participants completed OSHA, MEDIC, and Forklift Training to strengthen their workforce credentials.

Career exploration opportunities exposed participants to potential educational and professional pathways through presentations from the Army National Guard, Nortek Air Solu-

tions, Tribal education programs, workforce development services, and other community partners. Participants also engaged in cultural enrichment activities, including Cheyenne and Arapaho language classes, helping strengthen cultural identity while promoting personal growth and leadership development. The program further expanded youth engagement through SAGE Club meetings, where participants developed public speaking, storytelling, and practical life skills that support both personal and professional success.

As another successful summer came to a close, program leaders remain committed to expanding opportunities for

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The Heart of a Wind Harvester now in Oklahoma

In late July, two boxed permanent magnet generators completed a journey of nearly 6,000 miles, from Soga’s manufacturing facility in Italy, to a storage unit just a few miles from the Lucky Star Casino in Concho, Okla. Wind Harvest engineer Omar Garcia drove from his base in Amarillo, Texas, to El Reno to operate the forklift and get the crates safely under cover. It’s the kind of unglamorous, hands-on logistics work that rarely makes headlines, but it represents a real milestone, the components for two Oklahoma Wind Harvesters™ are now on the ground, and one step closer to being installed.

In March 2026 during the Reservation Economic Summit (RES2026), Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes’ Gov. Reggie Wassana signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with Wind Harvest International to install the first phase of a Wind Harvester vertical axis wind turbine at Lucky Star Casino in Concho, Okla.

Gov. Wassana stated at the time, “This agreement reflects our tribes’ vision for a future rooted in both economic strength and environmental stewardship. By partnering with Wind Harvest

we are taking a meaningful step toward energy independence for our people. The Lucky Star Casino is the heart of our economic activity and powering it with clean innovative technology is a proud achievement for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.”

As stated on their website, wind-harvest.com, “It’s worth pausing on why the generator matters so much. Every wind turbine, no matter its shape or height, is ultimately a machine for turning moving air into electricity, and the generator is where that conversion actually happens. A direct drive permanent magnet generator does this without relying on a gearbox to increase the generators’ speed. An external electrical supply to create its magnetic field. The magnets are built in, which means fewer moving parts, less energy lost to friction and heat, and a design that holds up well at the variable speeds typical of vertical-axis wind turbines like the Wind Harvester.”

In a Wind Harvester, the generator is highly efficient, and durable enough to run for decades with minimal maintenance. Every 20 years or so they would

undergo rewiring with new installation and be ready for another 20 years of service at fraction of the cost of the original, and less than a new generator the same size would be likely to cost in 20 years. It does have “permanent magnets” that can keep their power for a very long time if properly maintained.

There’s still work ahead, completing manufacturing of the remaining components, installing the turbines, and putting them through third-party certification. But every major project moves forward one delivery, one forklift run, one stored crate at a time. The generators have arrived and Wind Harvest International is getting close to be able to finally put up the first Wind Harvester 4.0.

Wind Harvest International, Inc. is a California-based renewable energy technology company, founded in 2006. The company makes, sells, and develops projects for its Wind Harvester brand of H-type turbines, the only known product designed to harvest the highly energetic, turbulent wind that blows 15-80 feet above the ground.

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SEPTEMBER 9, 2026

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late Lt. Gov. Gib Miles and
Clara Bushyhead.

Light refreshments will be served following the
dedication of the memorial benches.



ARAPAHO DISTRICT 3



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A lens on the future, Janice Spottedcorn dreams of a career in photojournalism

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

With big dreams of one day becoming a freelance photographer and pursuing a career in media, Cheyenne and Arapaho youth Janice Spottedcorn, 17, took her first step of making her dreams a reality when being selected to attend the 2026 Washington Journalism and Media Conference as a National Youth Correspondent.

From El Reno, Okla., Spottedcorn traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the media conference held July 19-July 26 at George Mason University. Only a select group of students from all over the country were invited to attend the media conference. Spottedcorn was chosen based on her academic accomplishments and her media interests in journalism and media studies.

Chosen youth correspondents participated and explored the creative and ethical tensions that are portrayed in journalism and media. Students got to hear firsthand from speakers who are well-known leaders in the media community and from presenters, including prominent journalists, CEOs of major media outlets, researchers and recent college graduates successfully entering the field.

As a senior high school student and youth

correspondent interested in media and photography, Spottedcorn was first introduced to the media field her freshman year of high school when she was a part of the yearbook staff and was able to use cameras and attend all the sporting events taking photos

“I really just fell in love with it, so I really got more into it and researched it, then our sophomore year, we went to CV Tech and I saw a booth for digital media technology and that just really pushed me more into that passion,” Spottedcorn said.

Spottedcorn has been taking a course at CV Tech in digital media technology and will earn her certification by the end of her senior year.

Growing a passion for sports photography, Spottedcorn loves taking photos particularly of basketball and football.

“I love that I get to just like capture a moment or a memory for someone. I think that’s so cool,” Spottedcorn said.

When Spottedcorn received a notice in the mail for participation in the Washington Journalism and Media Conference as a national youth correspondent, she initially thought it was a scam.

“I opened it and I had to like look it up to see if it was a scam or something and I’m like researching about it. You have to be invited to it, it could be anyone, that invites you to the conference and then they’ll pick you and then you get invited,” Spottedcorn said.

Spottedcorn doesn’t have a clue as to who nominated or invited her to the media conference, as she questioned everyone she could think of. After considering the media conference and trip details to Washington D.C., Spottedcorn had to pay a tuition of \$2,000 which included her flight and trip. Spottedcorn worked to raise the funds and did fundraising efforts, along with some help from the Johnson O’Malley (JOM) program.

“I worked a lot during my junior year. You could do monthly payments on it and

it was \$600 every month so I did that, I did like two fundraisers out in Concho and then JOM helped me pay for my last payment, they also gifted me a \$300 gift card for when I went on my trip, so that was pretty cool,” Spottedcorn said.

Getting the opportunity to attend the media conference and travel outside of the state, Spotted felt excited to learn more about media and journalism.

“Me and my friends have talked about it because we both go to CVT and we like photography, one of my things was I want to get into journalism too, especially for like politics because they just go hand in hand, so that was something that I was really excited to learn more about in journalism,” Spottedcorn said.

While attending the conference, Spottedcorn got to hear from various speakers who were popular in the media world and who taught students about their rights, freedom of speech and real world experiences. Students were also split into groups, who Spottedcorn became well acquainted with throughout her trip.

While there, Spottedcorn also got to go sight-seeing as she explored Capitol Hill and the Native American Indian museum and other museums.

“It was just a really unique experience that I got, especially being Native American and getting this opportunity. That was like really amazing for me and hearing these speakers, some of them were so young, and it’s like if they can do that, I can do it too, the overall things that I heard throughout this conference was it doesn’t matter where you go, it matters what you do when you get there and that really stuck with me,” Spottedcorn said.

Participating in the media conference was important for Spottedcorn because she wanted to soak up all of the knowledge they were



Janice Spottedcorn, a participant at the Washington Journalism and Media conference, attends a speaker session at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. (Submitted photos)

giving and really learn more about media, as she believes it’s very risky in media. You either make it or you don’t, Spottedcorn said.

As part of attending the Washington Journalism and Media Conference, Spottedcorn will also earn college credit as students were tasked with documenting their experience at the conference.

Learning from her experiences, Spottedcorn hopes to use her expertise and dreams of one day becoming a freelance photojournalist.

“Where we are in the world right now, you know, our politics, there’s a lot of things that we’re facing now that we didn’t used to face. I want to be able to help capture these things and tell people these things and be able to tell them what’s going on in the world, to let them know that they have a voice, its really big, because these topics affect us, they affect everybody,” Spottedcorn said.

FBI sets \$25,000 minimum reward for dozens of unsolved Indian Country cases, part of a broader effort to address high rates of violence affecting Native American communities

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has established a minimum reward of \$25,000 in cases where people went missing or were killed in Indian Country, part of a broader effort to address high rates of violence affecting Native American communities.

The new minimum applies to more than 50 unsolved homicides and missing-person cases in tribal communities. Most of the cases are less than 10 years old, though a dozen have been unsolved for more than two decades, an AP analysis found.

Victims' families and experts are unsure the higher amounts will be enough to get tipsters to come forward, citing people's fears and distrust of the federal government.

"Everybody's scared in Oglala," said Lisa Carlow, whose father Patrick Carlow Sr. was found dead in his Pine Ridge Reservation home in 2023. "So to me it's like, OK, what do you guys know that you're not saying?"

The FBI investigates federal crimes on nearly 200 Native American reservations, along with the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. At the end of 2025, the FBI's National Crime Information Center recorded just under 1,500 active cases involving missing Native Americans, though not all become federal cases.

The FBI cited several cases in its recent announcement, including that of 8-year-old Maleeka Boone, who it said was likely struck by a vehicle on the Navajo Nation,

and San Carlos Apache teenager Emily Pike, whose body was found after she disappeared from an Arizona group home.

Mary Kathryn Nagle, a citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and an attorney who advocates for families of missing Native Americans, said federal investigators often "parachute in" to investigate crimes in tight-knit communities where witnesses may stay silent because of distrust and fear of retribution.

Still, she said, larger rewards could provide an incentive for people to talk and show families their loved ones' cases are being taken seriously.

"We have people in Indian Country who know what happened to our relatives," she said.

Luana Ross, who is Bitterroot Salish and a co-director of the Native Voices program at the University of Washington, said cash rewards could boost interest but often aren't paid out.

"It is my opinion that in reservation communities, people would be extremely reluctant to turn a friend or relative into a criminal justice system that hasn't served them well," she said.

Lisa Foster's longtime friend Mona Renee Vallo was found dead after a suspected hit-and-run along historic Route 66 in Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico, in 2022. Foster hopes the higher reward money will renew interest in the investigation.

Foster described Vallo as a positive, bubbly friend who could have fun no matter what. She was a member of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

"Someone knows something there," Foster said. "They have to. I mean, it's weird that she went to work and then all of a sudden this happened to her."

The reward in Carlow's case was increased to \$25,000 in July, up from \$10,000.

Carlow's family says the 73-year-old rancher was respected in the Oglala community. He mowed the grass for others and spent time with his grandchildren. The family said more calls started coming in after the reward was increased, but the wait for answers continues.

Meanwhile, the FBI declined to provide The Associated Press an update on the case.

"It's so hard to get your hopes up like that and think, 'This is it, we finally got dad's killer.' And then nothing comes of it," Lisa Carlow said.

She said fear keeps community members who may have information from contacting authorities.

"I think that's like deep-rooted within our people," said her sister, JoDee Carlow. "It's not just on Pine Ridge. It's on every reservation."

Relatives don't want cases to be forgotten

The FBI initially offered \$5,000 for information in the deaths of two brothers from Ohio, Matthew and Philip Reagan. The re-

ward was later doubled and now will hit \$25,000. Though not Native Americans, they were killed on the Navajo Nation and are featured on the FBI's Indian Country cases website.

The brothers planned to visit Canyon de Chelly National Monument during a trip to California. Authorities believe their SUV got stuck in mud after GPS sent them off course near Sawmill. They were shot multiple times while walking to seek help, authorities said.

Matthew Reagan's wife, Faye Wurster-Reagan, said she doubts a \$25,000 reward will persuade anyone in the small community to come forward.

"You would have to promise someone, like, actual protection," she said. "I mean, they brutally murdered two men."

She suggested the FBI instead put resources toward law enforcement to keep the cases from going cold and for liaisons to keep families informed.

FBI spokesperson Brooke Brennan in Phoenix said investigating crimes in Indian Country often is complex because of the remoteness, limited resources and extensive workload.

Wurster-Reagan hopes that families united in pain and grief over missing loved ones and unsolved killings might one day see justice.

"We're just getting forgotten, like no one is remembering any of us, and we're just told it's an active investigation," she said.

SUMMER YOUTH

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youth and strengthening partnerships with employers and tribal leaders. For many participants, the experience provided more than just a summer job; it offered a foundation for future success and a pathway toward achieving their career goals.

The DREAMS Program expresses its sincere appreciation to Gov. Reggie Wassana, Lt. Gov. Hershel Gorham, and members of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Legislature for their continued support and commitment to investing in the tribe’s future workforce.

“The success of the Summer Youth Employment Program would not be possible without the strong support of our tribal leaders,” Anne Pedro, DREAMS director said. “We are grateful to the governor, lieutenant governor and legislators who recognize the importance of workforce development and continue to champion opportunities for our tribal youth.”

Special recognition is also extended to the many SYEP employers who opened their doors to young workers throughout the summer. Businesses, nonprofit organizations, tribal entities, government agencies and community partners provided meaningful hands-on learning experiences that helped participants build professional skills while contributing to their communities.

The DREAMS Program would also like to extend a special thank you to Canadian Valley Technology

Center, Cheyenne and Arapaho Social Services, the Food Pantry and the Dept. of Parks and Recreation for generously providing facility space and support throughout the summer. Their willingness to accommodate trainings, meetings, workshops, orientations and program activities played a critical role in the successful implementation of the SYEP. By opening their facilities to participants and staff, these partners helped create safe, accessible, and welcoming environments where youth could learn, grow, and prepare for their futures.



The summer concluded with a recognition banquet held at the Canadian County Expo Center, where participants were honored for their accomplishments and successful completion of the program. A youth appreciation outing to Frontier City provided an opportunity for participants to celebrate their achievements and build lasting friendships after a summer of employment, training and personal development.

In addition to operating the SYEP, the DREAMS Program continued providing workforce development services to adults throughout the reporting period. The program assisted clients with employment and training applications, educational support and workforce

preparation. Three participants successfully earned their G.E.D. during the reporting period, demonstrating the program’s continued focus on education and lifelong success.

The success of the 2026 SYEP reflects the collaborative efforts of tribal leadership, employers, community partners, educators, parents and dedicated staff members working together to prepare the next generation of Cheyenne and Arapaho leaders. As the program looks ahead, DREAMS remains committed to creating new opportunities that empower youth, strengthen communities, and build a skilled workforce for the future.

BISON PROJECT

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to the health and regeneration of grasslands. Their grazing, movement and other behaviors affect the plants and soils around them.

The project seeks to examine those relationships scientifically without separating them from the cultural knowledge and experience of the people who have maintained relationships with buffalo for generations.

That combination is particularly important as more tribal nations work to restore and expand buffalo herds.

Scientific research into regenerative bison grazing is still relatively new. Although there is evidence that buffalo can contribute to grassland biodiversity and ecosystem health, researchers say there is still much to learn about the specific management practices that produce the strongest ecological results.

The Cheyenne and Arapaho project provides an opportunity to study those questions in a real-world tribal land management setting.

The project is not intended to benefit only the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

Researchers hope the information collected in Oklahoma can eventually help buffalo stewards throughout the United States make informed decisions about herd management and grassland restoration.

One challenge is the cost of ecological monitoring. Sophisticated equipment

such as flux towers provides valuable information, but it would not be practical for every buffalo operation to install and maintain such systems.

To address that challenge, Collaborative Earth researchers are developing models that could eventually estimate ecological outcomes using more accessible sources of information.

Those models may incorporate publicly available satellite data, including Landsat imagery, along with less expensive field measurements and observations.

The goal is to develop tools that can help land managers understand the ecological effects of buffalo grazing without requiring the same level of expensive monitoring equipment used in the demonstration project.

Researchers are also working to assemble a larger dataset documenting where and when land managers have transitioned to buffalo grazing.

That effort includes collaboration with the Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative and other buffalo stewards.

By combining information from multiple buffalo programs with field observations, researchers hope to develop more sophisticated models capable of estimating and forecasting the ecological effects of bison grazing across different landscapes. The Collaborative Earth

team brings together researchers from several fields, including soil biogeochemistry, ecology, ecohydrology, carbon-cycle modeling, remote sensing and environmental science.

Part of the team conducting the bison research is Dr. Julie Tierney, Collaborative Earth’s Bison Lead. Tierney is an ecologist whose work focuses on biogeochemical cycling, global change, ecosystem resilience and food systems.

As a postdoctoral researcher with Collaborative Earth, Tierney leads applied research in partnership with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, focusing on the ecological, carbon and climate-related effects of buffalo grazing on tribal lands. She earned her doctorate in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Princeton University.

Albert Mason Jr. is working on bison dataset assembly and remote sensing through the Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative and Collaborative Earth. Mason is a graduate wildlife researcher with the Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative and a master’s student at the University of Wyoming. His research examines interactions between buffalo and other wildlife, tribal populations and land uses. Mason is an enrolled



member of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe.

Dr. Bethany Blakely, a postdoctoral researcher with Collaborative Earth and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Ecometeorology Lab, works on flux towers and carbon-cycle modeling. Her research examines plant-atmosphere interactions, climate change and land management, including how land use can influence climate.

Blakely works with both remote sensing and flux data and has experience designing, building and maintaining specialized sensing systems. She holds a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Notre Dame.

Dr. Maoya Bassiouni, a research scientist in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy and Management at the University of California, Berkeley, contributes expertise in ecohydrology. Her work combines

ecosystem ecology, geophysical theory and data science to understand how vegetation affects water, carbon and energy cycles within soil systems.

The project also includes faculty advisors with expertise in ecology, sustainability and environmental systems. Dr. Stephen Porder, a professor of Ecology, Biology and Environment and Society and associate provost for sustainability at Brown University, serves as a faculty advisor on soil biogeochemistry and sustainability policy. His research has focused on nutrient and carbon cycling, agriculture and ecosystem restoration.

Dr. Paul Stoy, a professor in the Department of Biological Systems Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, serves as another faculty advisor. His research focuses on the exchange of mass and energy between the

biosphere and atmosphere, including the processes that influence regional climate and long-term carbon and water movement through terrestrial ecosystems.

Leading Collaborative Earth’s work is Aaron Hirsh, a scientist, writer and entrepreneur whose research and writing have focused extensively on environmental education and ecological regeneration. Hirsh holds degrees from Princeton University and Stanford University.

Together, the researchers represent a multidisciplinary approach to studying buffalo and the prairie.

Another major partner in the effort is Mad Agriculture, an organization focused on supporting regenerative agriculture.

Mad Agriculture describes itself as an ecosystem of organizations working to advance regenerative agriculture by providing farmers

See BISON PROJECT pg. 7



Annual Tribal Council Meeting

REVISED COMMUNITY MEETINGS 6-8pm

Tuesday September 1, 2026 – Concho ERC

Thursday September 3, 2026 – Geary ERC

Tuesday September 8, 2026 – Hammon ERC

Wednesday September 9, 2026 – Kingfisher ERC

Tuesday September 15, 2026 – Seiling ERC

Thursday September 17, 2026 – Watonga ERC

Tuesday September 22, 2026 – Woodward ERC

Thursday September 24, 2026 – Oklahoma City

AGENDA

Resolutions including the 2027 Budget

Tribal Council Coordinator Applicants

The remaining resolutions will be posted September 1, 2026

SPECIAL GUEST BIA Acting Superintendent Julie Anderson

To explain services offered by BIA

POTLUCK DINNER at 6pm

Provided: stew, bread, dessert & water

Albert Old Crow

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JOM

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have also been scoring near the top in reading and math nationally for more than 30 years, according to a study by the University of Oklahoma released this year. The data for the study came from the National Assessment of Educational Progress, known as the Nation’s Report Card.

In 2024, Native American students in Oklahoma were ranked No. 1 in the nation for reading, math and combined achievement among their peers in the 13 other states with sufficient data.

Jackie White, program director of Oklahoma’s American Indian Education Department and president of the National Johnson-O’Malley Association Board, said that could be because of her office’s work.

The Oklahoma State Department of American Indian Education employs aggressive outreach tactics aimed at ensuring eligible students are accounted for so they can receive support.

That outreach manifests in a yearly Zoom meeting for school superintendents to understand how to count their students, school visits and advocacy at the state level to ensure multiracial children are included in Native American student counts.

The opportunities the JOM fund provides, however, may be threatened by an increase in eligible students and inaction from Congress.

Star Yellowfish, director of Native American student services at Oklahoma City Public Schools, said one of the determining factors for the No. 1 placement in the Nation’s Report Card could be that students are being counted correctly and receiving support because of it.

Nara Nayar, a technical assistant consultant for the American Institutes for Research, said Oklahoma was one of the first states to initiate the collection of tribal affiliation data. That ensures a cleaner analysis of educational results of Native American students.

“Tribal affiliation data collection is huge because it allows disaggregation for the tribes who can then support their students with their own tribal education departments around attendance and tutoring,” Nayar said. “Tribal education agencies do so much in terms of programming and supports, so it’s that alignment, and it’s that support for qual-

ity student identification and reporting kind of at the local level that is gonna make all the difference.”

That localized solution is hard to execute on a national level, however, when so many states lack sufficient data in the first place. The other states with sufficient data Oklahoma was compared to in the University of Oklahoma study were Alaska, Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The author of the University of Oklahoma study, Adam Tyner, said the data came from the Nation’s Report Card. The exams are given every other year to a sampling of fourth- and eighth-grade students nationwide and are considered the best tool to compare student achievement across states.

Tyner called it the gold standard in nationally comparable standardized testing.

“There’s a lot of states that just don’t have enough Native American students in order to create a breakout group for them, and so that’s the case for most states in most years,” he said.

The Nation’s Report Card data collection doesn’t operate like a census. States have to meet specific statistical thresholds before the federal government decides to break out different student groups. It also does not disaggregate data when two or more races are listed on a student’s file.

“If you check that ethnicity box, Hispanic or Latino, then regardless of what you check in the race box, you get reported out as Hispanic or Latino in any kind of reporting that usually states and the federal government does and there’s no overlap between these categories,” Nayar said.

Nayar works on the Indigenous Student Identification Project. It’s a collaborative effort between the American Institutes for Research and the Indigenous Education State Leaders Network. Their research found 70% of Indigenous students in U.S. public schools are not represented in data reporting or analysis.

“I want to know how our Native students are doing,” Yellowfish said. “I want to know how our Black students are doing. Our com-

See JOM pg. 7

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

continued from pg. 1

Tribes Dept. of Administration, where she oversees the tribes’ largest department and operations.

“That was really great just to get different perspectives of how we’re trying to exercise our sovereignty and this was just a really great way to spend our week talking about our sovereignty,” Norris said as they discussed economic development, health care and covered policy, grants and contracts.

As some departments don’t have much interactions with one another, sitting through the presentations and program, Whitlow said she was able to see how topics can align with one another, including her own department.

Whitlow, who has served as the executive director for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Dept. of Education for the past 11 years and is also working alongside staff for a charter school for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes.

“Just listening to the presenters was so helpful, making it make sense for me, coming from education,” Whitlow said.

Carrying the leadership roles in their departments, Whitlow said leadership to her is the big picture part of her job, to have a vision and mission, the fun stuff, to think broadly about what they want to do. However, when handling the day-to-day issues of management and solutions to problems, it’s easy to get lost.

“I think what was nice about this is to be removed from our day to day and get

to have these conversations of things that may be we don’t get to have every day and having people give you feedback ... you’re also getting advice and thinking I can be of help to other people, and this isn’t just Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, these are other tribes and what they’re dealing with,” Whitlow said.

Norris felt it was beneficial for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes having both Norris and Whitlow attending the program, being able to attend and bring back what they learned to the tribe because ultimately, they are serving tribal citizens.

“I try to keep that vision in mind as I’m doing the task of the day, we’re resolving employee conflicts, we’ve got to give our administrative leave because of inclement weather and what not, but at the same time looking overall at the bigger picture, how can we work better together so that we can advance each of our departments as the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes,” Norris said.

For Norris, attending the leadership academy was extremely beneficial.

“It made you think, it made me ponder things that I wouldn’t probably have even considered as I’m doing my daily tasks, so it was really beneficial,” Norris said.

As tribal leaders and head of their departments, Whitlow said participating in the program was important for herself being in education, for students, families and even her employees to see

that she’s committed to lifelong learning.

“I don’t know everything and we had the opportunity to learn, step out of our comfort zone, I’ve never been to that area, even as an adult, we’re walking into this space you’ve never been, you don’t know anybody but being pushed into that situation of making you really own what you know, making you own who you are and putting that in the forefront,” Whitlow said.

Working alongside others through the program, everyone was likeminded, Whitlow said, of what could they do for their people, what could be done to make situations better.

“That’s always the big question, trying to figure out how you can do that through education, or economic development or health care in a different position, so I think it was really such a great experience,” Whitlow said.

Whitlow said while her and Norris had to leave a day early, they enjoyed their time at the academy, as it was engaging and both got to meet many other tribal leaders through the program.

“You’re just in a group of native people, you can joke and share stories and learn about other people, it was just a lot of fun and it kept us engaged. Your presenter would always have a question and they’d always have a question for your table, we had lots of opportunities, we had to get up and speak and do group work, it was really a collaborative learning ex-

See DARTMOUTH COLLEGE pg. 10



American Indian Exposition Parade 2026

Photos / Rosemary Stephens

BISON PROJECT

continued from pg. 5

with technical assistance, financing and supply-chain support.

Its work is based on the belief that the health of land, water and people is interconnected.

For the Cheyenne and Arapaho Bison Project, that philosophy complements the scientific and tribal components of the research.

The project is ultimately concerned not only with ecological measurements but also with whether regenerative buffalo management can create tangible benefits for the people responsible for caring for the land and animals.

Researchers hope that demonstrating measurable ecological outcomes could eventually help establish greater economic value for buffalo products associated with regenerative management.

A successful model could provide buffalo producers

with additional incentives to maintain management practices that benefit grasslands while supporting the animals and the communities connected to them.

Creating a model for buffalo stewardship

The project comes at a time when interest in restoring buffalo to grassland ecosystems is growing among tribal nations, conservation organizations, ranchers and others.

For the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, however, buffalo restoration and stewardship is about more than conservation.

Buffalo have been deeply connected to Cheyenne and Arapaho people for generations, and the return and care of buffalo represents an important continuation of cultural relationships and responsibilities.

The research being conducted at Concho offers an opportunity to document

another part of that relationship — the ecological connection between buffalo and the prairie.

By monitoring the herd and the land over time, researchers hope to determine how different grazing patterns influence the ecosystem and whether carefully managed buffalo herds can contribute to greater biodiversity, healthier soils and increased resilience to climate change.

The project could also help demonstrate that Indigenous stewardship and modern scientific research do not have to exist separately.

Instead, traditional knowledge, on-the-ground experience and scientific measurement can inform one another.

Ultimately, the researchers hope the work will provide evidence that can help buffalo stewards across the country make decisions about herd management, grassland restoration and climate resilience.

The larger vision is a prairie in which healthy grasslands support healthy buffalo herds, and healthy buffalo herds in turn contribute to the regeneration of the grasslands.

For the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, the work at Concho places the Tribes at the center of a growing national conversation about buffalo, ecological restoration and the future of the Great Plains.

As CAP documents the project and scientists continue gathering data from the Concho herd, the story being developed is one that reaches beyond research results.

It is a story about buffalo, land, science and Indigenous stewardship and about what can happen when those elements are brought together to better understand and care for the prairie.

DECEMBER "MINERALS" DISTRIBUTION

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

DEADLINE OCTOBER 1

HAVE YOU MOVED?

In order to receive the minerals per capita distribution, any changes to your address must be received in Enrollment by OCTOBER 1

SCAN ME TO GET THE FORMS

COA Form **MUST** be submitted by mail or in person.

Form **MUST** be notarized.

W-9 **MUST** be submitted with COA Form.

W-9 **MUST** match what is on the COA Form.

Forms **CANNOT** be accepted by fax or email.

DEPARTMENT OF ENROLLMENT . (405) 422-7600 . enrollment_dist@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov

SIGN UP FOR DIRECT DEPOSIT!

Want to get your percap a week before the checks get mailed?

Tribal members who have Direct Deposit approved before October 1, will have the percap funds deposited to their account ONE WEEK before the checks are mailed out!

SCAN ME TO SIGN UP

PER CAPITA OFFICE . (405) 422-7725 . percapita@cheyenneandarapaho-nsn.gov

JOM

continued from pg. 6

munities want to know if there are disparities. Are there differences? Those are really important things when we are determining: How are students learning? What are they learning?"

Data collected from 2021-22 shows that as many as 66,129 students went uncounted in Oklahoma.

Getting the numbers right is difficult. Historically, Native American students have been undercounted for a few reasons. Forced assimilation, boarding schools and displacement still affect the way data is collected.

"My great-grandmother did not put down the blood quantum she truly was because at that time, it was not a good thing to do," White said.

Her great-great-grandmother came to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears at 12 years old.

Many people never obtained their citizenship or membership card because people did not see it as important as it is today, White said.

Now, a hurdle that many administrators face is correctly identifying students who are multiracial.

"So many times, our Native students are miscalculated or not counted correctly," Yellowfish said. "So we have Native students that are Black or, they identify as white. They identify as all kinds of things, but they're still tribal citizens."

The Johnson-O'Malley funding used a standard student count of 272,102 eligible Native American students from 1995 until 2018.

After the Modernization Act passed in 2018, more students became eligible for the program because the requirements for enrollment changed. The updated count for the 2025-26 school year is 317,102. However, the funding has not increased or been adjusted for inflation despite the number of eligible students increasing.

Last December, the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina was recognized federally after 137 years.

"Right now they're anticipating over 10,000 students that are eligible," White said. "Let's just say the count goes up 10,000, but the money doesn't come up, too. What happens? Everybody gets cut."

A catch-22, White said.

"We have to count the students to convince Congress that we need more money and the tribes are there," she said.

That funding deficit is their biggest obstacle, White said.

"It's a fear among tribes and schools, and it's legit,

that if they put in every student that's eligible, the count goes up, but the money is not coming with it," White said.

During the 2023-24 school year, 128,401 Native American students were served through 401 Title VI programs in Oklahoma totaling \$29.6 million.

There were 48 Johnson-O'Malley contracts or grants serving 107,379 students across 21 participating tribes and 27 public schools in Oklahoma in 2024.

According to the Bureau of Indian Education's yearly budget justifications, Oklahoma's Johnson-O'Malley funds have gone from \$1.2 million in 2019 to \$1.1 million in 2024. Following the Modernization Act, the national Johnson-O'Malley fund total rose from \$14.9 million to \$20 million in 2020. The fund has stayed around the \$21 million mark since 2021 despite the BIE estimating as many as 578,070 eligible students in 2023.

The Johnson-O'Malley program operates on a budget of \$64 per student, leaving funding gaps where once there were none.

In response to the gaps, the Muscogee Nation allocates extra money to bolster the Johnson O'Malley program. They try to maintain a \$75 minimum per student.

There are approximately 23,000 eligible students in the Muscogee Nation.

The National Indian Education Association continues to call on tribal leaders, educators and partners to petition for an increase in funding from the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. A hearing would give Johnson-O'Malley participants a chance to show how they are affected by funding gaps.

The 2023 Bureau of Indian Education budget request states that the United States has a trust and treaty responsibility to provide eligible Native American students with a quality education. Maintaining the success of Native American students in Oklahoma might necessitate advocacy at the federal level.

But student success does start locally, White said. She said her office works to facilitate communication between tribal governments, the state, and schools to boost student success and family understanding.

"The key is that it's not you versus me, it's we," White said. "Those are our kids."

Oklahoma Watch, at oklahomawatch.org, is a non-profit, nonpartisan news organization that covers public-policy issues facing the state.

Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Invite You to the Midway of the Mother Road

OKLAHOMA STATE FAIR 26

STATE FAIR DAY

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

OPTION 1

Opening Day Pick-up

Modern Living Building - Free Parking Gates 1, 2, & 6

10:00 am to 8:30 pm

YOU PAY \$10 TO GET IN THE GATE AND WE'LL TAKE CARE OF UP TO 6 "UNLIMITED CARNIVAL RIDE WRISTBANDS" FOR YOU AND YOUR KIDS!

MIDWAY OPENS AT 1:00 PM | WRISTBANDS CAN BE USED ANY DAY OF THE WEEK!

Adults must present your Cheyenne Arapaho tribal ID and have your kids with you!

You must be the parent/guardian of the kids with you!

Wristband vouchers will ONLY be provided for those who will be riding the rides!

You will not be able to pick up vouchers for others!

GOLF CARTS AT GATE 2 for elders

Catch a ride from the gate to the Modern Living Building!

STATE FAIR YOUTH ATTENDANCE POLICY

AFTER 5:00 PM--minors must be accompanied by a chaperone over the age of 25, or their parent/guardian.

OPTION 2

Friday, September 18

9:00 am to 1:00 pm

we will be at the OKC Tribal Service Center 4400 SW 21st Street (off S Meridian) in OKC

3:00 pm to 8:30 pm

we will be at the RESPECT Gym - Concho

For more info contact the Executive Office at (405) 422-7734

PG-2020-0033A

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE TRIAL COURT

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMATRIAL COURT

P.O. BOX 102 DOCKET PAGE

CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022FILM IMAGE

COURT CLERK

DEPUTY

In the Matter of the Guardianship of:

Z.M.

Minor Child,

Case No. PG-2020-0033A

NOTICE OF HEARING BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: KADELYNN MILLER UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 23rd day of SEPTEMBER 2026, at 10:00A.M. in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR, on the above date and time indicated for 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://us02web.zoom.us/j/4524251494?pwd=S2RCenU2WDVhOEFMbnM1OjRkXzE4OT09 or https://zoom.us/join

Meeting ID: 452 425 1494

Password: Court2021

Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:

Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799

Meeting ID: 452 425 1494

Password: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 17th day of August, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk

Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

PG-2024-0051

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE TRIAL COURT

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMATRIAL COURT

P.O. BOX 102 DOCKET PAGE

CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022FILM IMAGE

COURT CLERK

DEPUTY

In the Matter of the Guardianship of:

Z.L.S.

Minor Child,

Case No. PG-2024-0051

NOTICE OF HEARING BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: ADAM JESUS SALAZAR UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 16th day of SEPTEMBER 2026, at 10:00A.M. in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

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Password: Court2021

Phone conferencing for non-smartphone or traditional telephone users:

Telephone number: 1 (346) 248-7799

Meeting ID: 452 425 1494

Password: 854454251

Dated at the Trial Court this 11th day of August, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk

Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

PG-2026-0015

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE TRIAL COURT

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMATRIAL COURT

P.O. BOX 102 DOCKET PAGE

CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022FILM IMAGE

COURT CLERK

DEPUTY

In the Matter of the Guardianship of:

K.S.S.

L.P.F.H.

Minor Children,

Case No. PG-2026-0015

NOTICE OF HEARING BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: KIVAH FOUR HORNS UNKNOWN ADDRESS

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Dated at the Trial Court this 17th day of August, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk

Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

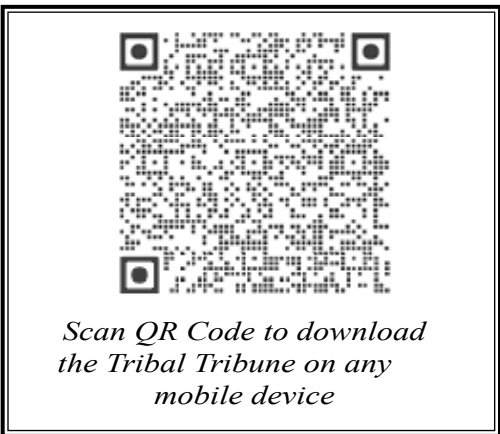
HAPPY BIRTHDAY



Happy 25th Birthday MaKayla Whiteshield
Septemher 6
Love, mom



Happy Birthday Nick Durfee!
August 25
Keanu, Mom, Dad, and Jess love you!!



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



Calendar of Events

2026 Cheyenne and Arapaho Labor Day Powwow

Sept. 4-7, 2026 at the Colony Powwow grounds in Colony, Okla. Gourd dance daily at 2 p.m. Grand Entries Friday Sept. 4, 8 p.m., Sept. 5-7, 7 p.m.

Head Staff-Cheyenne: MC Max Bear, HS Joel Motah, HMD TBA, HLD Crystal WhiteShield, HGD Cato Red Hat. Head Staff-Arapaho: MC James Sleeper, HS OT Sankey and Phoenix Whiteshirt, HMD Brycen Whiteshirt, HLD Regina Youngbear, HGD Robert Tabor. Color Guard Buddy Bond. Memorial Flags: Friday, Deforest ‘Mock’TallbeR, USMC, Saturday, Johnny Fletcher, USMC, Sunday, Rollin Haag Sr., US Navy, and Monday Lavona Mae Birdshead, US Army.

For more information contact Richard Deer at 405-889-6949, Wilma Blackbear at 580-791-1689 or Amick Birdshead at 580-210-3345.

All Nations Rezcovery 2nd annual Powwow

Sept. 19-20, 2026 at the Concho Powwow grounds in Concho, Okla. Gourd dance 1 p.m., supper break 5 p.m., Grand Entry 7 p.m. Saturday contests Tiny Tots, Juniors Teens. Sunday contests Golden Age Men & Women, Womens and Mens, dancers must make one Grand Entry.

MC Isaac Rhoads & Carmello Reveles, HS Bullet Watan, HM John Soap Jr., HL Georgia Harjo, Miss Indian OU, HMG Derek Tofpi, HLG Lydia West, ADs Brian Felder & Bobby Cometselah, Co-Hotst Starhawk Society, Colord Guard MCN Womens Honor Guard and Honored Flags, Saturday Manuel Knifechief, U.S. Army and Sunday Arleigh Rhoads, U.S. Marine Corps.

Environmental Oversight Committee Public Meeting

10 a.m. - 11 a.m. Sept. 24, 2026 in the large conference room located within the Dept. of Administration building in Concho, Okla. Emergency Management will present ‘Emergency Preparedness’ presentation. For more information contact the Environmental Protection Agency at 405-422-7469.

Watonga Cheese Festive, Plains Collective Art Festival set for October 9-10, 2026

The annual Watonga Cheese Festival and the Plains Collective Art Festival will begin with an opening ceremony on Main Street in Watonga, Okla., at 12 p.m. Friday Oct. 9 lasting until 5 p.m. The festival will resume Saturday Oct. 10 from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Watonga’s Senior Citizen Center will be serving a meal of chicken and noodles with dessert for \$8 per person and indoor seating 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Friday. Golf carts will be available for senior citizens for transportation to events on Main Street.

A Quilt Show at the Community Theatre, art show including Indigenous Art will be held at the Oasis Church and also an Indigenous cooking demonstration will be held at 12:30 p.m. on Friday and 10:30 a.m. on Saturday.

There will be music and entertainment at the Centennial Park on Main Street, Cheese and Fry Bread tasting line at City Hall, a food contest and Fry Bread contest, panel discussion, and Indigenous Fashion Shows 5 p.m. on Friday and 3 p.m. on Saturday at the Pocket Park on Main Street.

Don’t miss the Blues Concert at 7 p.m. Friday at the Pocket Park and the famous Rat Race will begin at 9 a.m. Saturday followed by the parade at 12 p.m.

There will be art vendors, food concessions and children’s activities including a petting zoo, bouncy house, tractor pull and a fireman obstacle course.

For group trips please call Mary Ann Teply at 580-623-0085. There will be parking areas available for buses if needed.

ANITA
greenwalt

NICK'S
barber shop

1515 Sunset Dr.
El Reno, OK

262-1132

NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY

LEGAL NOTICES

CIV-2025-0077

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES
OF OKLAHOMA
FILED AUG 11 2026

IN THE TRIAL COURT
CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX 102
CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

DOCKETPAGE
FILMIMAGE
COURT CLERK
DEPUTY

KHAELYNN WHITEMAN
Plaintiff,
VS.
DONTAE BACON
Defendant,

Case No. CIV-2025-0077

NOTICE OF HEARING
BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to:
DONTAE BACON
UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 16th day of **SEPTEMBER 2026**, at **10:00A.M.** in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

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 - 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 11th day of August, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

CIV-2026-0051

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES
OF OKLAHOMA
FILED AUG 11 2026

IN THE TRIAL COURT
CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX 102
CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

DOCKETPAGE
FILMIMAGE
COURT CLERK
DEPUTY

In the Matter of:
SHALAYNA KAANE
Petitioner,
VS.
DEXTER HALL
Respondent,

Case No. CIV-2026-0051

NOTICE OF HEARING
BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to:
DEXTER HALL
UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 23rd day of **SEPTEMBER 2026**, at **10:00A.M.** in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

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- 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 17th day of August, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

CIV-2026-0052

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES
OF OKLAHOMA
FILED AUG 11 2026

IN THE TRIAL COURT
CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX 102
CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

DOCKETPAGE
FILMIMAGE
COURT CLERK
DEPUTY

AUGUSTA D. SLEEPER
Plaintiff,
Vs.
CHRISTIAN A. GONZALEZ
Defendant,

Case No: CIV-2026-0052

CIVIL SUMMONS BY
PUBLICATION

CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES TO: Christian Gonzalez
Address Unknown

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO FILE A FORMAL WRITTEN ANSWER to the *Petition for Protective Order* 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 11th day of August, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

JFD-2026-0015

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES
OF OKLAHOMA
FILED AUG 11 2026

IN THE TRIAL COURT
CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX 102
CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

DOCKETPAGE
FILMIMAGE
COURT CLERK
DEPUTY

In the Matter of the Dissolution of Marriage of:
MARY KENNEY
and
TERRENCE KENNEY

Case No. JFD-2026-0015

NOTICE OF HEARING
BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to:
TERRENCE KENNEY
UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 23rd day of **SEPTEMBER 2026**, at **10:00A.M.** in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR, on the above date and time indicated for 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://us02web.zoom.us/j/4524251494?pwd=S2RCenU2WDV0OFMzM0I5Q3RxcTdhOT09> or <https://zoom.us/join>
 - 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 11th day of August, 2026.

Mary Elledge, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

P-2026-0001

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES
OF OKLAHOMA
FILED AUG 11 2026

IN THE TRIAL COURT
CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX 102
CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

DOCKETPAGE
FILMIMAGE
COURT CLERK
DEPUTY

In the Matter of the Estate of:
MILLCENT YOUNGBEAR
Deceased Member of the
Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes,

Case No. P-2026-0001

NOTICE BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to: Any and all Heirs of MILLCENT YOUNGBEAR, Deceased

You are hereby notified that Nathan Littlehawk has filed in this Court a Petition for Appointment of Personal Representative of the Estate of Millicent Youngbear, deceased. That said petition is hereby set for hearing in the Courtroom of said Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes, 100 W. Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma, on the 7th day of **OCTOBER, 2026** at **10:00A.M.**, at which time you may appear and show cause, if any you have, why said relief should not be granted.

Dated this 11th day of August, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

PG-2019-0021

CHEYENNE & ARAPAHOTRIBES
OF OKLAHOMA
FILED AUG 17 2026

IN THE TRIAL COURT
CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHOTRIBES OF OKLAHOMA
P.O. BOX 102
CONCHO, OKLAHOMA 73022

DOCKETPAGE
FILMIMAGE
COURT CLERK
DEPUTY

In the Matter of the Guardianship of:
E.L.S
Minor Child,

Case No. PG-2019-0021

NOTICE OF HEARING
BY PUBLICATION

The Cheyenne-Arapaho Tribes to:
DONOVAN SMITH
UNKNOWN ADDRESS

The above-styled case is hereby set for hearing in the Trial Court of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes on the 23rd day of **SEPTEMBER 2026**, at **10:00A.M.** in the courtroom, 100 Black Kettle Boulevard, Concho, Oklahoma.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED TO APPEAR, on the above date and time indicated for 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:
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<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4524251494?pwd=S2RCenU2WDV0OFMzM0I5Q3RxcTdhOT09> or <https://zoom.us/join>
 - 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 17th day of August, 2026.

Tawny Melendez, Deputy Court Clerk
Cheyenne and Arapaho Trial Court

Back to School Bash Brings Clinton Community Together

CLINTON, Okla. — The Clinton community came together Aug. 22 for a free Back to School Bash, welcoming families for an afternoon of fun, entertainment and school-year excitement.

The event received strong support from several Cheyenne and Arapaho owned businesses, including Annette and Brandon Nowlin, owners of Native Creative Beads; Marissa Sorter, owner of Compassion First Care-Givers; Shonda Williams, owner of Natures Farm Girl; and Sarah Grow with Dart Phone. Each contributed to and donated to the community event.

Families enjoyed a variety of activities, with the dunk tank proving to be a favorite among attendees. Clinton Tornado Cheer entertained the crowd with a special performance, while tribal dancers and drummers shared a cultural presentation with the community.

Organizers expressed their appreciation to everyone who attended, donated, volunteered and helped make the Back to School Bash a success.

The strong turnout demonstrated the power of community support as Clinton families gathered to celebrate the start of a new school year.



Above: Dancers who participated in the Back to School Bash were back row r-l: Aracelie Chavez, Marley Gamboa and Avianna Oldman-Zumwalt. Front row r-l: Eternity Frank, Bravery Nowlin and Genevieve Goodblanket.

Below: Annette Nowlin (right) and Brandon Nowlin, Cheyenne and Arapaho citizens and owners of Native Country Beads in Clinton, Okla.



Cheyenne and Arapaho Citizen and owner of Compassion First CareGivers, Marissa Sorter and husband Kyler Sorter giving goodies out to youth during Back to School event. (Submitted photos)

OBITUARIES

OBITUARIES

Jacob Wakefield Allrunner

Jacob Wakefield Allrunner “Maheameoeste,” 32, of Thomas, Okla., was born March 18, 1994, in Clinton, Okla., to Don Allrunner and Sandra Williams. He passed away Aug. 10, 2026, in Oklahoma City.

Jacob was raised in Thomas and graduated from Thomas High School in 2012. He made Thomas his home throughout his life and worked various jobs in the Thomas and Clinton areas.

Jacob enjoyed gaming on his PlayStation and had a great love for music. He also loved to travel, especially with his mother Sandra. Before her passing, the two shared many memorable trips together, traveling to places such as Las Vegas, the Redwood Forest, and Graceland. Those adventures and the time spent together created memories Jacob treasured.

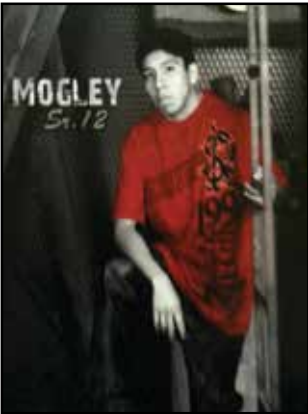
Jacob had a special place in his heart for animals and enjoyed caring for dogs and cats. He also had a caring and devoted nature toward his family. When his father became ill, Jacob lovingly

stepped into the role of caregiver, providing him with care and companionship.

Jacob was a member of the Native American Church and was proud of his family, heritage, and traditions.

He was preceded in death by his mother Sandra Williams, maternal grandparents, Edna Hadley and Billy Gene Williams Sr., paternal grandparents, Jessie Allrunner-Youngbear and Herman Youngbear, paternal great-grandfather and namesake Cheyenne Chief Jacob Allrunner, and his wife Sage, grandmother Eunice Hadley, aunt Della French and brothers, Steven Howlingwater and Ryan RedBird.

Jacob is survived by his father Don Allrunner of Thomas, son Kiason Allrunner of Albuquerque, N.M., sister Jennifer Riggles and her companion Kevin Birdshead of El Reno, Okla., aunts, Mary Smith and husband David of Longdale, Okla., Sharon Allrunner of Clinton, and Dolores Howlingwater and husband Charles of Thomas, uncles, Billy Gene Williams Jr. of



Oklahoma City, and Joel Hadley and wife Renae Nightengale of McAlester, Okla., Barbara Benally of Clinton, Jody Youngbear of Clinton as well as other relatives and friends who will cherish his memory.

A traditional wake service was held Aug. 16 at the Clinton Emergency Response Center in Clinton, Okla. Funeral services were held Aug. 17 at the Freedom Worship Center in Thomas, Okla., officiated by Rev. Gerald Panana and Rev. Mona Bearshield, followed by an interment at the Allrunner Cemetery under the direction of Lee Home-Town Funeral Home.

Mitchell Allen Oliver

“When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice.”

Mitchell Allen Oliver was born in El Reno, Okla., on July 29, 2002. He passed on Aug. 20, 2026, in El Reno at 24 years of age.

Mitchell was a citizen of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes. He graduated from Riverside Indian School in 2020 and later attended college at Redlands Community College. He worked as a Drop/Count team member at Lucky Star Casino.

To know Mitchell was to know someone who carried an extraordinary amount of love. In one of his most honest moments, he said, “I just love so much. I have all this love, and I just love so much.” Those words perfectly described Mitchell and the way he lived. He loved deeply, cared genuinely and gave everything he could to the people around him.

Mitchell was calm, easy-going and always paying attention, but once he became comfortable, his humor came alive. He was always cracking jokes, singing, dancing and finding ways to make people smile. His presence could make even an ordinary moment feel special.

Music was a large part of Mitchell’s life. He loved singing along to his favorite songs and dancing whenever the music moved him. He loved his hats, which became a recognizable part of his personality and style. He also had an impressive knowledge of cars and could immediately recognize a Mercedes-Benz, Bentley, or

nearly any other vehicle. He loved watching UFC, going to the gym, playing basketball, cooking on the grill and working with his hands. Mitchell did not simply move through life, he truly enjoyed it.

More than anything, Mitchell loved his family. He spoke proudly of them often. His love for his family could be heard in the way he spoke about them and seen in the way he showed up for them.

Mitchell had a rare emotional intelligence. When someone became upset or felt mistreated, he reminded them that they could never truly know what another person was thinking or going through. He encouraged the people around him to look beyond appearances, respond with patience, and lead with compassion instead of judgment. Mitchell saw the person underneath the situation.

He was everything someone needed him to be in the moment. He could be a calming presence, a listening ear, a helping hand, an honest voice, or simply the person who made someone laugh when life felt too heavy. Mitchell did not only tell people he cared, he showed them. No matter what he was carrying himself, he still found room in his heart to help someone else.

Mitchell made people feel seen, protected and cared for. He taught others how to be softer without becoming weaker and showed them that love could be expressed through the smallest everyday actions. His life was far too short, but the love he gave was powerful enough



to remain with everyone fortunate enough to receive it.

Mitchell was preceded in death by his father Joey Allen Oliver, his brother Aaron Oliver and his grandparents, David Hail, Ramona Oliver, Elmer Surveyor and Jennie Mae Coffey.

He is survived by his mother Erica Louise Coffey, his brothers, Shay Allen Oliver and Dakota Pedro, his sisters, Raven Oliver and Analysa Pedro, his niece Mya Whiteshirt, his nephews, Angel Whiteshirt and Joshua Bigmedicine Jr., his aunts, Jeannie Bigfoot and Brandi Bigfoot and many other loving aunts, uncles, cousins, relatives and friends.

Mitchell will be remembered for his laughter, his music, his helping hands, and the enormous love he carried inside him. The love he gave will continue to live through every person whose life he touched, and he will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him.

An all-night wake service was held Aug. 25 at the Concho Emergency Response Center in Concho, Okla. Funeral services were held Aug. 26, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Cantonment Cemetery.

Lillie June Harrison-Flute

Lillie June Harrison-Flute was born Jan. 7, 1981. She passed from this earth on Aug. 5, 2026.

Lillie is survived by her children, Kylie Hunter, Ezekiel DeVaughan, Gracie DeVaughan, Nathaniel Harrison-Flute and Pattie Haag, her sister Elizabeth Kaulaity, and grandchildren Dean Hunter Alejandro (AJ) Kaulaity and Azalea Kaulaity.

She is preceded in death by her father Rudolph (Rudy)

Harrison, mother Patricia Kodaseet, daughter Natalie Harrison-Flute, brother Eldon (Qweetz) Beard and nephews, Sabastian Thompson and Chauncy Beard.

Wake services were held Aug. 12 at the Grace Fellowship Church in Anadarko, Okla. Funeral services were held Aug. 13, at the same venue, followed by an interment at the Memory Lane Cemetery under the direction of Smith Funeral Home.



Gladys Deanne Barnett-Sweezy

Gladys “Buttons” Deanne Barnett-Sweezy was born April 19, 1961, in Oklahoma City, and passed away on Aug. 5, 2026, in the same city she called home throughout her life. “Buttons” will be remembered for her loving heart, her devotion to family, and the many ways she brought comfort and joy to those around her. Her life was a gift, and her memory will continue to live on in the hearts of her loved ones.

Gladys lived a life marked by love, resilience, and devotion to her family. She was a woman whose presence could be felt in every room, and she was known for her warm spirit, her steady strength and the care she showed to those around her. She carried herself with grace and a quiet determination that touched the lives of many, and she will be remembered with deep affection by all who knew her.

She graduated from high school and went on to serve others as a certified nurse’s assistant, a role that reflected her compassionate heart and her willingness to help those in need. Through her work, she demonstrated patience, kindness, and a genuine concern for the well-being of others. Her life of service was a meaningful part of who she was, and it left a lasting impression on the people she cared for and worked alongside.

Gladys found joy in the simple pleasures of life. She loved visiting thrift stores, browsing bookstores, and spending time at yard sales, always enjoying the excitement of finding something special. She especially cherished visiting with her sisters, and she loved her grandchildren dearly. These moments brought her happiness and reflected the deep family bonds that were so important to her.

She was preceded in death by her mother Marcianna Renee (Littleman) Jacobs, her step-father Eddie Jacobs, her sisters, Tsiannina Barnett and Natasha Santana, her nephews, Terry Hoang and Charles Jason Smith, her grandmother Pauline Flyingman, her grandpa Robert Boone and grandfather Robert Littleman and her grandma Florence Barnett. Their memories remained close to her heart, and she carried their love with her throughout her life.

Gladys is survived by her husband Robert Sweezy, her father Sampson Barnett, her sons, Christopher Hawk of McAlester, Okla., George Hawk Jr. of Oklahoma City, Matthew Sweezy of Guthrie, Okla., and Robert Sweezy Jr. of Oklahoma City, her daughters, Tsiannina Barnett of Oklahoma City, and Dylan Sweezy of Oklahoma City, her brothers, Damin Jacobs of Oklahoma City, and Anthony Walkingbear of Okla-

homa City, and her sisters, Vanessa Smith of Oklahoma City, Denise Meshaya of Oklahoma City, Shauna Barnett of Oklahoma City, Michelle Snow and husband William of Oklahoma City, Cassandra Fixico of Oklahoma City, a, Karen Barnett of Oklahoma City, and Cindy Barnett of Oklahoma City. She also leaves behind many grandchildren, extended family members, and friends who will forever treasure her memory.

An all-night wake service was held Aug. 11 at the Springfield Methodist Church in Okemah, Okla. Funeral services were held Aug. 12, at the same venue, officiated by Rev. Clarence Yarholer, followed by an interment at the Palmer Barnett Family Cemetery under the direction of Park Brothers Funeral Home.





Marley Gamboa, Clinton High School

Latoya Lonelodge, Senior Reporter

playing softball since she could play t-ball at the age of 4.

“I just always found the love to do the sport,” Gamboa said.

Gamboa also participates in track and field, where she does the discus and shot put. Gamboa’s parents had always put her in sports and softball had stuck out the most to Gamboa out of all the sports she’s competed in.

What Gamboa has come to love the most about softball are the teammates she’s come to know and connect with through the sport.

“I just love the connection we all have with each other, it’s like we’re sisters and not teammates, we get along with each other even though we may be losing a game or winning a game, our energy and our bond together, you never experience that in any other sport,” Gamboa said.

Entering her senior year of high school and softball season, Gamboa looks forward to having fun on the field and playing her last year of softball.

“I’m just excited to have the most fun as I possibly can on the field,” Gamboa said.

Gamboa’s continued

motivation for playing softball comes from her grandmother, as she would always attends all of Gamboa’s games showing her support.

“She used to always tell me that I was good enough to complain, she was always the one who would push me to keep going, I’d always want to skip practice and stuff, but she would make it to where I wouldn’t miss practice. I have a crazy family life outside of softball I could easily just get unmotivated to go, but my grandma was always the one that pushed me to go,” Gamboa said.

With the season already in motion, the team had a rough start, but Gamboa has had faith they’d make a comeback and is excited to see her team progress through the season.

“We’re having a rough start, but seeing how we’re coming back from that is actually exciting to see because we know we can beat some of these teams,” Gamboa said.

Gamboa’s goals for the season include improving her hitting and becoming more confident on the field. To be someone her teammates could count on.

“I also just want to grow as a leader, it’s my senior year, I want to help our team come together and just have a good season,” Gamboa said.

Managing a 3.8 GPA in academics, Gamboa juggles school and sports best by staying organized and making sure her schoolwork gets done when she has time, as it can be a lot on her plate at times.

“I’ve learned how to

manage my time and balance all of my school responsibilities, especially with long practices and even on the weekends, I’ll want to go hit at the barn. So like always make sure my school is done before because school always comes before sports for me, but I always want to give my sport my full attention also,” Gamboa said.

Pursuing softball, what Gamboa hopes to accomplish overall is to be the best role model she can be for all the younger generations.

“I hope to improve as much as I can be to become the best player I can be and I just want to make the most of my last season, help my team succeed and leave the field knowing I gave it everything I had,” Gamboa said.

Practicing every day of the school week, Gamboa has been working on becoming more confident in herself, especially when at the plate and knowing what she’s capable of.

“I do tend to get nervous and shaken up a lot. Especially when the balls hit to me in the outfield sometimes, I’ll just kind of bobble the ball. But, I’m trying to become more confident in what I’m doing and know where I’m going, know where the plays at and becoming more confident at the plate, knowing that I can hit the ball and I can put it in play,” Gamboa said.

Continuing to practice on what she struggles with the most, especially with hitting, is the best way to improve her game.

“I think getting more live reps helps me build confidence and make better deci-

sions during live games and like practicing what you’re not good at, practicing what you’re not good at will get you more confident,” Gamboa said.

Good qualities, Gamboa believes to have as a softball player are attitude, confidence and being a good teammate, as you have to have confidence in yourself when things aren’t going the team’s way and being able to move on from mistakes.

“Being a good teammate is also really important because softball is a team sport, not just an individual sport and just encouraging your teammates and each other, and keeping everyone’s energy up can also make a huge difference, even sitting on the bench just cheering on your teammate will help a lot,” Gamboa said.

Playing in her final season of softball, Gamboa hopes to be remembered as the teammate who gave her best and never gave up, even when things got difficult. She wants to be remembered as someone who was a good teammate and kept the energy up.

“I just came back from an injury not too long ago, being out for those two weeks during the summer was so hard for me to just watch from the bench because I wanted to play so bad, but I couldn’t. So trying to keep the energy up just from the dugout, I just wanted to be remembered as the one who always kept the energy up, encouraged my teammates, and was just always there for my team,” Gamboa said.

Being a part of the team, when playing softball, Gamboa feels in the zone when

out on the field, she feels a part of something bigger.

“It makes me feel good. I feel confident, happy and like I’m a part of something bigger than myself. Like when I’m out there playing I’m able to forget everything else that happens and just focus on the game, it’s also given me a place where I can challenge myself and make memories that I’ll always remember,” Gamboa said.

And what softball has taught Gamboa the most is hard work, patience and not giving up when things get hard, as mistakes are going to happen.

“What matters is how you’re going to respond and keep going, it’s also taught me how important teamwork is and how much you can accomplish when everyone supports each other, softball also taught me to believe in myself and keep pushing myself to get better,” Gamboa said.

After graduation in the spring of 2027, Gamboa plans to further her education and attend college. Although she is undecided on what she wants to study, she hopes to attend college for either one of her sports.

Marley’s mother is Choya Hammond and her stepmother is Nova Washa. Her siblings include Tomas (Tripp) Gamboa III, Eternity Washa, Ruby Washa, Lucas Washa, and Genesis Johnson. Her paternal grandparents are Tomas Gamboa and Tina Gamboa. Her maternal grandparents are Fugi Hammond and Dorothy Heap of Birds. Her grandmother, who raised her, is Pamela Heap of Birds.

DARTMOUTH COLLEGE

continued from pg. 6

perience,” Whitlow said.

Whitlow said it’s important for people, leaders or those who don’t call themselves leaders, to be committed to being better and learning more.

Hoping to use what they’ve gained from the program in their everyday roles, Norris said being in the TLA setting gave her a sense of empowerment as an Indigenous woman growing up in her community.

“I always knew as a little girl I was going to come back. I’m going to work for my tribe, I didn’t know what capacity it was going to be, but honestly at the end of the day, I absolutely love what I do. I’m able to help employees, we’re out here serving tribal members, and to me that’s the most important thing, just in our community, I think that was stressed a lot during our time at this leadership academy,” Norris said.

Going forward, Norris said it’s important to always keep that in mind, as they are doing it for their communities.

“How can we make us better, we’re growing as the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes but at the same time we got to make sure we have our policies in place. I’m studying good economic development goals, we had a session on grants, and so as we’re applying for funding always keeping in mind

what we’re doing and the vision for Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes,” Norris said.

Applying for the TLA program, both Whitlow and Norris were encouraged to apply by Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Lt. Gov. Hershel Gorham.

Gorham first came to know about the Tribal Leadership Academy in 2025 when he received an email from the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA). Gorham applied and was selected to attend the 2025 TLA cohort.

For Gorham, it was a great experience getting to meet, interact and learn with other tribal leaders from around the country an entire week.

“It’s such a small group, we were able to learn a lot from one another and the networking that resulted from the TLA is valuable because I am able to reach out to other members of my cohort when I have a question about something outside of my expertise. The agenda focused on a wide variety of topics that included the federal government, tribal government, economic development, etc.,” Gorham said.

Encouraging both Whitlow and Norris to apply for the Tribal Leadership Academy, Gorham recognizes the leadership roles that both take on for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes as Whitlow also serves on various

boards, including serving as a board member for Riverside Indian School, which is a Bureau of Indian Education school.

“Dr. Whitlow has dedicated her entire career to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes and has always emphasized the utmost importance of serving the public and Native American people. Dr. Whitlow recently defended her PhD in Education dissertation at Kansas State University and accomplished all of this while serving full time as our executive director of education and navigating the challenges of fulltime parenthood,” Gorham said.

While Norris oversees a large department and multiple programs, Gorham believes she has done a stellar job of navigating all the typical issues that arise with the enormous responsibility.

“She has done a great job of ensuring that all of her programs create strategic plans and use them as their guide to building success. Ms. Norris has a strong foundation in management and exemplifies great leadership qualities that made her a great addition to the Tribal Leadership Academy,” Gorham said.

Gorham’s hope is that the TLA was an eye-opening experience for them and allowed them the opportunity to learn from other tribal leaders from around the

country, just as he did. Gorham said being an effective tribal leader require knowledge and experience outside of one’s own tribe.

“By participating in the TLA, tribal leaders are able to learn firsthand what other First Nations are experiencing and it also introduces tribal leaders to experiences outside of their own tribe that they can take back home and help them grow as tribal leaders. Ultimately, I would hope that it prepares them for an elected tribal leader position should they choose to pursue a career in politics,” Gorham said.

Since its inception at Dartmouth, the TLA has quickly gained a reputation for providing tribal leaders with an intimate and engaged environment to learn from fellow tribal leaders and expert faculty presenters about best governance practices for Indian Country, Duthu said.

The broad issues covered for this year’s TLA included inter-governmental relations, state, federal, tribal, economic development, health care delivery, grant writing and tribal citizenship policies and practices.

“While measuring impact is challenging for any start-up initiative, we’re beginning to hear news from our TLA alumni about the ways the academy has helped them engage their work in more informed, impactful and co-



Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Dept. of Education Executive Director Dr. Carrie Whitlow (left) and Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Dept. of Administration Executive Director Sabrina Norris attend the Tribal Leadership Academy held at Dartmouth College in Hanover, N.H. (Photo courtesy of Dartmouth College)

herent directions based on the lessons learned,” Duthu said.

Overall, the week-long goal of the academy program models the critical importance of working collaboratively and intentionally with partners, other tribal leaders, governments and universities, to advance some of the most urgent priorities of tribal nations.

“For some tribal leaders, the value added might take

the form of acquiring deeper knowledge about the links between cultural values and priorities and proposed economic development plans or strategies for improving health care delivery in tribal communities. For others, it may include creating a network of fellow tribal leaders from across the U.S. who are now known to them and available to help out on issues of common concern,” Duthu said.