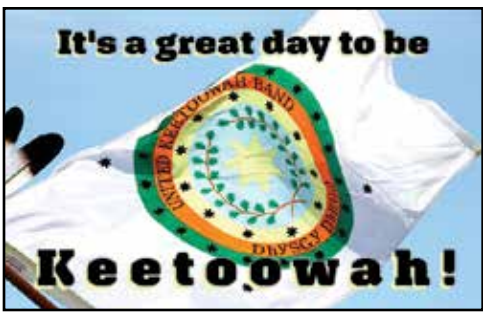




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# GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

YSG GWY A&P Official News Publication of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma February 2026

## United Keetoowah Band Recognizes National Law Enforcement Day

Honoring those who protect and serve our communities



UKB Tribal Lighthouse officers

LANI HANSEN, Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- On January 9th, United Keetoowah Band Tribal Lighthouse was recognized during a special luncheon to celebrate National Law Enforcement Day.

In a statement Chief Jeff Wacoche said,

We gather here not just to honor a profession, but to celebrate the unwavering commitment, courage, and resilience of those who wear the badge. Police officers are the guardians of our communities, the protectors of our peace, and the champions of justice. They are individuals who voluntarily step into harm's way, often placing their own safety on the line to ensure that we can live our lives with a sense of security.

Every day, police officers face challenges that most of us can only imagine. They encounter situations that test their strength, their resolve, and their humanity. From responding to emergencies to building relationships within the community, they do so with a profound sense of duty and integrity. These brave men and women work tirelessly, often under immense pressure, to uphold the law and serve the public with honor.

Let us take a moment to reflect on the sacrifices they make. The late nights, the missed family gatherings, the moments of uncertainty—all of these are part of the job. Yet, despite these challenges, they carry out their responsibilities with compassion and professionalism. They are trained to protect and serve, but they also strive to understand, to listen, and to support. They are not just enforcers of the law; they are advocates for justice and peace.

We must also remember the families of our police officers. Their loved ones endure the worry and anxiety that come with the job, standing by them with unwavering support. Today, we salute not only the officers but also the families who share in the sacrifices and challenges that accompany this noble profession.

As we honor our police officers today, let us also recognize the importance of trust and collaboration between law enforcement and the communities they serve. Together, we can build a safer, more just society



Chief Jeff Wacoche and Director of Lighthouse Charlie Dreadfulwater



Chief Jeff Wacoche with Grant County Sheriff Tim Irvin

where everyone feels valued and heard. It is through this partnership that we can address the challenges we face and create a future where safety and justice are not just ideals, but realities for all.

To our police officers: thank you for your service, your bravery, and your dedication. You inspire us all with your commitment to making our communities better places. You remind us that true strength lies not just in the badge you wear, but in the hearts, you touch and the lives you change.

As we move forward, let us continue to support and uplift our police officers, recognizing their contributions and advocating for the resources they need to succeed. Together, we can foster an environment where respect, understanding, and collaboration flourish.

Thank you for being the heroes that you are. Thank you for your service and thank you for standing guard over our communities.

## Five Individuals Sworn in on the Education Committee/JOM Committee

First full Education Committee oversees incoming JOM Funding

LANI HANSEN, Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- During the United Keetoowah Band Tribal Council Meeting in January, five individuals were sworn in on the Education Committee/Tribal JOM Committee.

Those on the committee are returning committee member Dr. Corey Still (Chairman), and new members Melody Proctor, Travis Wolfe, Cody Robinson and Susan Adair.

Wolfe, who is the son of the late Della Wolfe a UKB member who had a strong heart for education has come onto the committee as one of the newest members. He said as part of the education committee it's about honoring his mother and honoring the Keetoowah people.

Robinson said, this is an opportunity to give back to the tribe, to make a difference and to make an impact. He received his Master of Divinity degree from Phillips Theological Seminary in Tulsa, Oklahoma back in May 2025. Now that he is back, this will allow him to give back and help with a program that has helped him through his education.

Adair looks forward to serving UKB students and expanding education programs by being a part of this committee.

Proctor has worked with Native students and has also been a student

herself who once received assistance from the education department. She is excited to give back to and continue working in education.

The Education Committee serves as an advisory committee for education. This committee has been active for many years seeing members come and go.

“Our primary function is an advisory committee, until Council voted us on as the JOM Committee as well,” Dr. Still said.

In the council meeting, it was said that the tribe now will be receiving JOM funding which this committee will be the oversight board of those funds. This is the first full committee the Education Department Director has seen since working with the tribe.

“I’m excited to have a full committee for a change,” Education Director Dr. Leslie Hannah said. “I have been here over four years now and the most we have had was four but even then, the number went down to three.”

The Education Committee met for its first meeting in January to discuss how to get community student and parent input on how to utilize the JOM funds going forward. Meetings are open to the public and are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30p.m. at the UKB Education Center classroom.



Education Committee members L-R: Cody Robinson, Corey Still, Melody Proctor, Travis Wolfe and Susan Adair.



The Education Committee's first meeting of the new year.

Keetoowah Museum “Getting Back to Basics” Series  
Presents

RIVER CANE  
TECHNOLOGY

2/21, 3/21 and 4/18  
918-871-2794





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Sequoyah Dist.  
Donald Adair  
918-931-0941



Tahlequah Dist.  
Sammy Allen  
918-931-0177

February Chief Chat



Chief's  
Corner

JEFF WACOCHE  
Chief  
jwacoche@ukb-nsn.gov

Siyo,

In January, we paused to recognize and honor the men and women who protect our UKB trust lands and community – UKB Lighthouse.

On National Law Enforcement Day, we thanked them for their service, their courage, and their daily commitment to keeping us safe. They stand on the front lines for our families. They carry a responsibility to our community that demands courage, selflessness and compassion.

Law enforcement is built on trust – trust between officers and the communities they serve. That trust is earned through presence, accountability, and respect and our Lighthouse officers embody those values.

We are grateful for them and we thank them for standing guard over

our trust lands and our community.

As we recognize Lighthouse service at home, we also remain vigilant in Washington, D.C.

Our rights, our programs, and our sovereignty are shaped by our singular history, legislation, regulations, and court decisions coming out of the nation’s capital. Some of those actions strengthen tribal nations. Others threaten to weaken our sovereign authority or undermine our ability to govern and care for our Members. It is

critical to our rights and sovereignty that we remain aware, informed and engaged to counteract the external forces that impact our Tribe.

That is why we are closely monitoring federal legislation and policy. And when action is needed, we are there defending the United Keetoowah Band, making our voice heard, and ensuring that decisions about our future are not made without us or in secret.

Just as our Lighthouse stand watch over our communities, your Tribal leadership is standing watch with what goes on in Washington. And together, we will continue to protect the rights and future of our people.

Wado.

Chief Jeff Wacoche

A Happy End of the Year for the Proctor Family

LOPA applicant Alex Proctor received keys to his new home right before the new year.

JAY, Okla- The United Keetoowah Band Housing Department ended 2025 putting a smile on one tribal member’s face as they presented Alex Proctor with a key to his new home.

Proctor and his family came together filled with gratefulness to the tribe, this was something they have long waited for. Proctor heard about the Lease to Purchase Program (LOPA) and began working on his application. He was on the list since early 2025 and was excited to hear of how fast the department found him a home.

“We were so happy to present Mr.

Proctor with his new home right before the new year,” Housing Director Roxana Wilden said. “This program is more about owning a home, we help people who can take responsibility of a home.”

Many of the homes the department give away are applicants coming from the Delaware, Goingsnake, Flint and Tahlequah district.

Requirements for this program are:

- Must be a UKB member
- Must not be on any public or Indian Housing program
- Never been a homeowner

- Must not be a convicted sex offender or drug offender
  - Must not owe any debt
  - MUST SIGN AN AGREEMENT THAT YOU WILL TAKE CARE AND MAINTAIN YOUR PROPERTY
- This program prioritizes families and elders with families.
- If you qualify for this program, put an application in and if you have already done this it needs to be updated every year.
- For more information contact UKB Housing at 918-871-2773.



UKB Housing Director Roxana Wilden presents Alex Proctor with keys to his home.



Alex Proctor, his daughter Adaisha and her baby were joined by the Housing Department to celebrate this milestone.




New home to Alex Proctor



UKB  
STILWELL  
SUB - OFFICE

STILWELL OFFICE HOURS  
MON-FRI: 8:00-11:00  
MON-THURS  
AFTERNOON HOURS: 2:00-5:00  
CLOSED AT 11:00 ON FRIDAY  
PHONE: 918-696-871-2814  
EMAIL: MBALLARD@UKB-NSN.GOV  
FLINT DISTRICT  
REP. FRANKIE STILL  
918-507-1822  
GOINGSNAKE DISTRICT  
REP. WILLIE CHRISTIE  
918-822-3803



Goingsnake District  
Sub-office

HOURS: MON-THUR, 8:30-12:30  
1:00-4:00  
FRI. 8:30-12:30  
UKB KANSAS COMMUNITY BUILDING  
280 S HWY 10, KANSAS, OK  
CONTACT:  
TERRIE TURTLE, 918-871-5038



We Are  
HIRING

Please visit our UKB website at:  
www.ukb-nsn.gov for all opening positions!

Apply Now

Applications can be found at  
www.ukb-nsn.gov/employment

Send your applications to:  
UKB Federal Programs Building at 18300  
W. Keetoowah Circle, Tahlequah, OK,  
74464. If mailing please address your  
envelope with ATTN: Human Resources.  
Completed and scanned applications will  
be accepted.



KEETOOWAH MUSEUM BRIEFS

A DRIVE FOR THE ARCHIVE

Be a part of our future by helping us preserve the past.

The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum would like to call on all tribal and non-tribal members to continue to help us increase our tribal archive. All efforts combined will be given to catalog, sort, group, and index information/documents/articles of historical importance to the United Keetoowah Band.

Call the Keetoowah Museum at (918) 871-2866 to contribute to our archives and to future generations. All types of historical information welcome...  
WA-DO!

Jewelry Repair Available in the Keetoowah Museum

The Keetoowah Museum is happy to announce that they will have an onsite jewelry repairman at the museum. Keetoowah tribal member Ray Wolf Walker of Wolf Walker Jewelry will be on site on Thursdays, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. He offers free inspection and cleaning of your jewelry, and the types of repairs he offers include chain solder, prong re-tipping, ring sizing – up or down, or tightening stones. For more information, or to get an idea of pricing, go to wolfwalkerjewelry.com. You may also contact him through Facebook.

The Keetoowah Museum Wants You!

The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum is now accepting applications for our volunteers for 2026! Assist with cultural activities, outreach, and special projects and earn credit hours for field trips, cultural classes, and prizes.

“We are so grateful for our volunteers, they have been a driving force in the growth of the museum and our programs. We have completed two full years of our official volunteer program and have taken two end-of-year trips including the Choctaw Museum in Durant, and the Crystal Bridges Time Loop in Bentonville, Arkansas,” said Barbara Girty Foster, Assistant Museum Director.

Applications will be accepted throughout the month of January. Orientation will be held on Tuesday, February 10 at 10:00 a.m. in the Keetoowah museum classroom. Applications are posted on the tribal website or can be picked up at the museum or main lobby in the UKB Tribal Services Building. For more information, contact Barbara Girty Foster at 918-871-2794.



Keetoowah Museum Buys Art by Appointment

“We put a call out for quality, handmade items, and our members responded,” said Ernestine Berry, museum executive director.

Have you visited the Keetoowah Museum gift shop lately? Well, if it has been a couple of months since your visit, you need to make another visit because the inventory is constantly changing.

“We put a call out for quality, handmade items, and our members responded,” said Ernestine Berry, museum executive director. “We have an inventory of beautiful beadwork – earrings, key chains, lanyards, stickball sticks and balls, baskets, medicine bags, quilts, walking sticks, tear dresses, ribbon skirts, ribbon shirts, dolls, teddy bears, carvings, flutes, blowguns, paintings and prints that are all created by the Keetoowah people,” she said.

The museum gift shop purchases quality Keetoowah made baskets of all sizes, especially baskets made of natural materials such as river cane, buckbrush, and honeysuckle. We would also purchase well-made rattles, shell shackles, moccasins, pipes, ribbon shirts, bolo ties, aprons, blowguns, and stickball sticks. The shop has a good demand for these items.

Keetoowah members, artisans and artists, interested in selling your arts/crafts to the museum, need to set an appointment on Tuesday or Wednesday to meet with museum director Berry. To make an appointment call 918-871-2866.



There are hundreds of beautiful handmade earrings for sale in the Keetoowah museum gift shop.







The gift shop has Keetoowah and Keetoowah Veteran Caps for sale, as well as Keetoowah T-shirts, patches, decals and flags.

LUNCH SERVED MONDAY - THURSDAY 11:30 AM – 1:00 PM, ALL MEALS TO GO MUST BE PICKED UP BY 11:00 AM - 11:30 AM  
BREAKFAST SERVED FRIDAY 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM, ALL MEALS TO GO MUST BE PICKED UP BY 10:00 AM – 10:30 AM  
All MEALS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE \*



FEBRUARY IS “BLACK HISTORY MONTH” - UKB TITLE VI - JIM PROCTOR ELDER NUTRITION CENTER MENU  
UKB 55+, SPOUSES = FREE, CDIB 55+ & SPOUSE MUST CONTRIBUTE TO COST OF MEAL \$1.00 EACH MEAL, GUEST \$5.00/Child 0-12 \$3.00

February 2026						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Jim Proctor Elder Community Center 918-871-2747 918-871-2861 Nat. Freedom Day	2 Groundhog Day Orange Chicken Egg Roll Fried Rice Chocolate Cake	3 Feed the Birds Day Soft Beef Taco Refried Beans Mex Rice, Strawberry Cream Cheese Pie	4 USO Day Pork Fritter w/ Potatoes/Gravy Salad, Hot Roll Apple Cobbler	5 Pork Rind Day Pigs N Blanket Coleslaw Corn, Pickle Cookie, Fresh Fruit	6 Nat. Wear Red Day Biscuits/Gravy Sausage, Eggs Hash Browns Fruit, Juice	7 UKB Regular Council Meeting 10 AM Justice Center Give Kids a Smile
8 Super Bowl 60 	9 National Pizza Day Chicken Alfredo Broccoli Baby Carrots Breadstick, Fruit Mix	10 Chinese New Year Green Goddess Taco Salad, Mex Rice Mex Corn Pineapple	11 Nat. Latte Day Meatloaf Mashed Potato's Mixed Veggies Salad, Roll, Fruit	12 Lost Penny Day White Beans w/ Ham Spinach Sweet Potato Cornbread, Fruit	13 Kiss Day Pancakes/Blueberry Bacon, Hash Browns Eggs, Cookies Fresh Fruit, Juice	14 Valentine's Day  
15 World Whale Day 	16 Nat. Almond Day UKB Tribal Offices Closed “Presidents Day” Holiday	17 Mardi Gras Day Shrimp Po' Boy Fried Zucchini/ Squash Corn on Cob Pickles King Cake	18 Pluto Day Chili Mac Casserole Broccoli and Cauliflower Salad Crackers Fruit Salad	19 Tug of War Day Catfish/Tartar Sauce French Fries Coleslaw Hushpuppies Fruit	20 Hoodie Hoo Day Biscuits/Gravy Bacon, Eggs Hash Browns Blueberry Muffin Citrus Fruit Salad	21 Sticky Bun Day Inclement Weather There will be no home delivered meals due to the safety of our driver
22 Walk Your Dog PLEASE CHECK ON YOUR ELDERS AND NEIGHBORS WADO	23 Banana Bread Day Hamburger Stew Hominy Commodity Cheese Cornbread, Fruit	24 Bartender Day Nachos Mex Rice Refried Beans Pineapple	25 Quiet Day Baked Potato w/ Fixings, Ceaser Salad Garlic Roll, Fruit	26 Nat. Chili Day February Birthday Hamburger's w/ Fixings & Fries Cake & Ice Cream	27 No Brainer Day KITCHEN CLOSED CLEANING DAY	28 Inclement Weather When Tahlequah schools are CLOSED FOR SNOW - UKB Offices will be Closed

Please stay home if you feel sick! Thank you for your patience and understanding - Title VI Staff - 2% Milk, bread and fruit served daily  
February 1<sup>st</sup>. is “Full Snow Moon” February was named for Roman goddess Februa, mother of Mars, the fever of love.  
Tradition suggests that a groundhog seeing his shadow on February 2 indicates that winter will be 6 weeks longer, otherwise spring will arrive soon. On average, February is the United States’ snowiest month, according to the National Weather Service.  
Valentines Day, when lovebirds express their affection with love, flowers, chocolate and romance! “When the cat lies in the sun in February, she will hide behind the stove in March” “If the weather be fine and frosty at the start of February, there is more winter ahead than behind.”  
“Here delicate snow=stars, out of the cloud, come floating downward in airy play, like spangles dopped from the glistening crowd, that whiten by milky ways. – The Snow Shower, - By Willian Cullen Bryant (1794 – 1878)  
“If February give much snow, A fine summer it doth foreshow.” “The February born will find sincerity and peace of mind; Freedom from passion and from care, if they the Pearl, will wear”



# Getting Back to Basics Series Broadens Offerings

Marilyn Craig, Museum Marketing Coordinator

TAHLEQUAH – The Keetoowah Museum will feature a new slate as it kicks off the 2026 “Getting Back to Basics” cultural classes. Each three-class series will cover the same broad topics which include gathering and harvesting, food, and sewing, however they will cover different specifics. The classes are offered once a month, from 10 am to 2 pm.

The River Cane Technology classes will be offered in three, four-hour sessions on Saturday, February 21; Saturday, March 21; and Saturday, April 18. The series will be presented in conjunction with UKB’s Historic Preservation Department’s Keetoowah Rivercane Conservation program and will feature presentations by UKB Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Roger Cain regarding river cane technology and Indigenous knowledge (IK). There will be no charge for this series.

“We are excited to learn about this plant and how important it has always been to our ancestors and how important it still is today,” said Barbara Girty Foster, assistant museum director.

The next series of classes will focus on Traditional Foods. Preserving traditional food is more than a culinary art, it is a lifelong skill that Keetoowah families have passed on through many generations. Participants will learn the process of preserving fresh vegetables while learning how to cook traditional foods such as wild onions, grape dumplings, and Kanuchi.

According to the website flavorious.com, traditional foods are not just about sustenance; they are deeply intertwined with the social fabric of communities, representing customs, beliefs, and ways of life. They serve as a medium through which cultural values, traditions and histories are conveyed from one generation to the next. The preparation and consumption of traditional dishes are often tied to specific ceremonies, festivals, and family gatherings, reinforcing social bonds and communal identity.

The cost of the three-class food series is \$75.

The schedule has been set as follows: Saturday, June 27 -Wild onions, bean ball, poke salad, fried mushrooms or potatoes; Saturday, July 25 - Hog meat, beans, grape dumplings, hot water corn-bread, & water cress; Saturday, August 29 - Neck-bone & hominy soup, Kanuchi, mustard or turnip greens, and fry bread (not traditional).

The final series for the year will be Intermediate Sewing and will be offered on Saturday, September 19; Saturday, October 17; and November 14, 2026. The cost for the three class sewing series will also be \$75. Participants will have the opportunity to step up their sewing skills and learn how to make a stomp/ribbon skirt. The class will learn about fabric & ribbon selection, making patterns, and machine stitching. All supplies and materials needed will be provided. Museum sewing machines will be shared unless you can bring your own.

Class size is limited to ten participants. For more information or to register for classes, contact Barbara Girty Foster at 918-871-2794.



There has already been a lot of enthusiasm about the upcoming rivercane series, including a field trip to a canebrake, along with river cane technology.



Participants will learn to make their own ribbon skirts in the intermediate sewing classes in September, October and November at the museum.



Wishi is one of many traditional foods that will be prepared during the classes scheduled in June, July, and August at the museum.

# N.A.M.E. and Lindy Waters III Foundation brought smiles to Oaks Mission School

OAKS, Okla- The Native American Missions and Evangelism team brought the Christmas “shoe boxes” back to Oaks Mission School right before the holiday season.

“The shoe boxes make a world of difference for our kids, and it’s truly appreciated because so many of our kids will have very little for Christmas,” Oaks Superintendent/Elementary Principal Holly Davis said.

The “Shoe Box” ministry, what N.A.M.E. refers it to, is filled with gifts such as hats, gloves and other little things for kids. This ministry has been around for over 25 years as the group travels to South Dakota/North Dakota to the Sioux tribes, and even New Mexico. N.A.M.E. is a mission group made up of individuals from different churches, ranging from Arkansas, Mississippi and Oklahoma.

Keith Marler, N.A.M.E. representative and Oaks School Board member, sets his heart out for the kids at his school, as he was able to bring the shoe box ministry for the first time in 2024. Marler, is an Oaks Mission graduate and currently serves as the Pastor of Country Baptist Church in Rose, OK.

“Bringing the shoe boxes to the children brings joy to my heart to see their faces with all the smiles and excitement,” Marler said. “It reminds me of when I was a child at school and the missionaries would come and bring small gifts and tell us about Jesus. One of my fondest memories as a child. And I am so thankful for the N. A. M. E for

all their hard work this year.”

Not only did the kids at this school receive their shoe box, but with the help of the Lindy Waters III Foundation stockings filled with snacks and gatorade was given to them.

Lindy Waters III is Kiowa and Cherokee, he played college basketball at Oklahoma State University and then was drafted by the Oklahoma City Thunder. Waters is currently playing for the San Antonio Spurs all the while giving back to the Native communities.

“This is such a great foundation and to have them come on board and partner with us this year

was extremely special,” Marler said. “I was very happy to have the Lindy Waters III Foundation to share with us on this project this year and looking forward to working with them in the future. We are truly blessed and grateful for all who supported on this mission project.”

Oaks Mission School has a long history of educating Native American children, which is why 85% of the student population comes from different tribal backgrounds with many of those being UKB tribal members. Oaks is a school providing education starting from three-years-old to twelfth grade, with 140 kids enrolled.



N.A.M.E. Representative and Oaks School Board members spoke to the children about the shoe boxes.



Oaks Mission Schools grades K-1st boys and girls



Oaks Mission Schools grades 2nd-3rd



Oaks Mission School grades 4th-5th



Oaks Mission School grades 6th-8th

## UKB Tribal Enrollment

18300 W. Keetoowah Circle Tahlequah, OK 74464 Open Monday-Friday | 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

As with other federally recognized tribes, the United Keetoowah Band has its unique process to determine membership. Visit [ukb-nsn.gov/membership](http://ukb-nsn.gov/membership) for Enrollment documents and a brief FAQ section of the most common questions about UKB membership. Find forms for Membership Applications, CDIB Instructions, Update Your Information and UKB Relinquishment.

For additional questions, or if you are a member who has lost your en-rollment card, call the UKB Enrollment Office Registrar Amanda Stopp at 918-871-2797. Questions concerning history, cultural practices, cloth-ing, language or ceremonies are better suited for our John Hair Cultural Center and Museum. Visit [ukb-nsn.gov/john-hair-cultural-center-muse-um](http://ukb-nsn.gov/john-hair-cultural-center-muse-um) or call 918-871-2866.



# Wolfe Walker Jewelry Classes offered at UKB Education Center

LANI HANSEN, Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- The art of jewelry making with Wolfe Walker Jewelry classes have been ongoing since the end of 2025 taking place at the United Keetoowah Band Education Center in Tahlequah.

Walker teaches individuals to explore their creativity, skills to design and create customized/ wearable art. He has been a jewelry maker since 1988. His classes offer metal characteristics, soldering and stone setting finishing techniques.



Cynthia Gaucin from Rogers, Arkansas, begins the process of making a ring.

Ongoing jewelry class taught by a lifelong jewelry maker.

“I came in wanting to make a ring,” Class participant Cynthia Gaucin said. “I was interested in this class because when I was younger, I’d string necklaces but then life got busy. One day I wanted to get back into making jewelry and came across Wolfe Walker’s website.”

Gaucin said she wanted to continue to take classes with him to make more jewelry. She hopes to start selling her finished artwork back home in Rogers, Arkansas.

Walker said, “For Gaucin, this was her very first time and she done well. For a beginner it does



Making progress on the shaping of the ring.

come involved since there is a lot of steps, flames and tools but I am with you every step of the way.”

Wolfe Walker Jewelry classes are affordable, he offers them Tuesday through Friday, 6pm-9pm and on Saturdays 10am-1pm then 2pm-5pm.

“I will continue to keep these classes going at the UKB Education Center until I no longer can,” Walker said.

For detailed information, visit <https://www.wolfewalkerjewelry.com> to learn more and to secure your spot.



Wolfe Walker guides Cynthia through making her ring.

# Keetoowah Lifeways Art Exhibit to Showcase Visual Artists Rackleff and Loftis

“Keetoowah artists, Rackleff and Loftis, are both accomplished artists who draw from their Native backgrounds to tell visual stories of Keetoowah Lifeways,” said Ernestine Berry, museum director.

Marilyn Craig, Museum Marketing Coordinator

The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum has set the date for its first visual art exhibit. The works of two Keetoowah tribal members will be featured when the exhibit opens on April 6th through October 6, 2026, the late Ed Rackleff and Roger Loftis.

“Keetoowah artists, Rackleff and Loftis, are both accomplished artists who draw from their Native backgrounds to tell visual stories of Keetoowah Lifeways,” said Ernestine Berry, museum director. “Rackleff used varied artistic mediums such as painting, drawing, silver and bronze to visually tell stories from the past and to express experiences of his Native his upbringing,” Berry said.

“Loftis uses ink, pencil, and paint on canvas to reveal historic moments or to tell stories of his Keetoowah ancestors and experiences of his childhood near Jay, Oklahoma. We are very pleased that these two Keetoowah artists’ works will be featured in our Keetoowah Lifeways Art Exhibit,” said Berry/

The late Ed Rackleff was a painter, silver-smith, and a sculptor. Rackleff was a full blood Keetoowah Cherokee, originally from the rural community of Rocky Ford, near his birthplace of Tahlequah, OK. Ed was a resident of Claremore for the past twenty-five years. He is well known as an award winning Native American artist having won numerous awards at several prestigious art shows throughout his career. Many of his award-winning works will be on display during the show.

His largest piece of art is a larger-than-life sculpture of Sequoyah now on display in front of the museum where it will stand until the show ends in October. Sequoyah is standing on a bed of leaves that has the title of the piece inscribed in

the Cherokee syllabary, The Leaves Say It – Sequoyah’s Cherokee. Sequoyah has his ever-present pipe in one hand and in the other a scroll inscribed with the words, “In honor of my Fellow Cherokee,” written also in Sequoyah’s syllabary.

Roger Loftis’ paintings include a variety of authentic imagery of Keetoowah life. Loftis was selected as one of the tribe’s Tradition Keepers in 2024. The museum has dozens of original paint-



Making Corn Meal is one Loftis’ prints on sale in the museum gift shop.

ings by Loftis and sells his prints in the gift shop. Prints now available in the gift shop include Kanuchi Woman, Hair Cutting Day, Gig Maker, Corn Meal Maker, and Medicine Maker, among others.

Look for more information on these artists and exhibit in upcoming issues of the Giduwa News, on the tribe’s website and the museum’s Facebook page, or call the museum at (918) 817-2866.



Rackleff’s The Leaves Say It – Sequoyah’s Cherokee sculpture is on display in front of the Keetoowah museum through the 76th Annual Keetoowah Celebration in October.

Hey Ladies, Get Your Valentine’s Studs Here...

Keetoowah Museum Gift Shop Sale

February 2026

Buy one pair of earrings, and get a free pair of beaded studs!

8:30 am to 4:30 pm

Monday through Friday

918-871-2866

UKB CCDF PROGRAM

BEGINNING JANUARY 15, 2026 THROUGH MAY 1, 2026:

UKB CCDF PROGRAM WILL BE SUSPENDING THE CHILDCARE SUBSIDY APPLICATIONS FOR UKB EXCLUSIVE MEMBERS.

NOTICE

The UKB CCDF Program will suspend the acceptance of applications for childcare subsidy beginning January 15, 2026 through May 1, 2026; no new applications will be accepted. The UKB CCDF Program reserves the right to consider applications for children receiving, or who are in need, of protective services.

If you have any questions, please contact the UKB CCDF Program/Office of Child Care at: 918-871-2799 option #3 or email to: [kgourd@ukb-nsn.gov](mailto:kgourd@ukb-nsn.gov).

Did You Know?

Enrollment Verification Service for UKB Tribal Members is 24/7!

UKB Enrollment Verification is available 24 hours per day, every day of the week, via the UKB Lighthouse Tribal Law Enforcement Department in the event that a UKB member should need to verify tribal enrollment at any time of the day or night.

The UKB is ready to assist in resolving any situation where proof of tribal enrollment is helpful.

UKB Lighthouse may be reached at any time at: 918-207-9955.

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