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FULL CIRCLE
Kitana Foreman fulfills her childhood dream of being Miss Keetoowah.
ANI GIDUWAGI, 5

GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

YSG GWY A&P Official News Publication of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma May 2022

Council amends Election Ordinance

The general election this year will be held on Monday, Nov. 7.

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT
Editor

TAHLEQUAH – The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Council unanimously voted to approve changes to its Election Ordinance among other business during its regular monthly meeting on April 2. Councilors voted unanimously to approve changes to its 2012 Election Ordinance, now known as the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma Election Ordinance of 2022.

Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche made the motion, with Flint District Representative Frankie Still giving the motion a second. “On this right here, kind of a touchy subject,” said Still. “The people are going to decide who they want in are in there anyway. I don’t care if you hold a master’s degree in whatever or you didn’t finish school. The people are going to decide no matter what. They’re the ones they decide who they want in there. I just want people to know that.” Major changes to the ordinance include eligibility requirements for officer and district representative positions. In addition to being required to be a resident of the Old Cherokee Nation for a period of no less than 12

months prior to filing, candidates for chief, assistant chief, treasurer, secretary and district representatives must also be exclusive UKB members for a period of not less than five years prior to filing. All candidates must not have served as an elected official of another federally recognized Indian tribe and must possess a valid driver’s license, as well as possess a high school diploma or equivalent. Treasurer candidates must also possess a minimum of five years of experience in the governmental accounting field to qualify. Additional requirements state that all candidates must not have a final felony conviction within the past

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EGGSTRAVAGANZA

Nearly 300 children came to the UKB’s Community Easter Eggstravaganza Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 9. Children were divided into four age groups, with prize eggs scattered throughout. PHOTOS BY BRITTNEY BENNETT/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

The UKB community egg hunt draws hundreds of children.

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT
Editor

TAHLEQUAH – Nearly 300 children made a run for approximately 6,000 eggs during the Community Easter Eggstravaganza Egg Hunt event held Saturday, April 9 at the UKB Celebration Grounds.

The event was sponsored by the United Keetoowah Band Child Care and Development Fund Program and the Henry Lee Doublehead Child Development Center. “I knew we were going to have a good turnout, but even I couldn’t have expected the amount of children that came,” said Kim Gourd, CCDF manager. “It was so good to see everyone and to be able to do this event for the community. We didn’t exclude anybody. It was free and open to the public.”

The egg hunt featured four age groups, including 1-3 year olds, 4-6 year olds, 7-9 year olds and 10-12 year olds.

Each hunt included prize eggs from CCDF and HLDC-DC, as well as from various tribal departments including Education, Enrollment, Environmental, Indian Child Welfare and Title VI. Representatives from the Delaware, Sequoyah and Tahlequah districts also awarded prizes.

“We did bicycles with helmets and protective gear. We gave out fishing poles with a life vest and some tackle. We also gave out little outdoor games that they could do and splash pads for the little ones,” said Gourd. “Other

SEE HUNT, PAGE 3



The event was free and open the public, drawing hundreds of families to the UKB Celebration Grounds in Tahlequah.



Members of the UKB Tribal Council and Miss Keetoowah also attended the event. From left are Sequoyah Rep. Junior Ca-tron, Chief Joe Bunch, Miss Keetoowah Kitana Foreman, Secretary Joyce Hawk, Easter Bunny Sheila Bluebird, Treasurer Sonja Gourd, Delaware District Rep. Caleb Grimmatt, Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche and Tahlequah District Rep. Alvin Hicks.

Keetoowahs attend NSU Symposium on American Indian

The theme of the event was “Fulfilling Our Ancestors’ Dreams.”

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT
Editor

TAHLEQUAH – More than one Keetoowah was in attendance for the 49th annual Symposium on the American Indian, held April 4-9 at Northeast-ern State University.

United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians Chief Joe Bunch was asked to make remarks at the opening ceremony festivities on Thursday, April 7.

“I mentioned to the crowd a brief history about who we are as Keetoowahs and that we’re 14,000 strong with a 1/4 degree blood quantum. It’s certainly a great time to assert our presence in Tahlequah,” said Bunch. “I also thanked NSU and its Center for Tribal Studies for hosting the event. It’s a good place to be. Next year around this time, put the 50th annual Symposium on the American Indian on your calendar.”

The theme of this year’s symposium was “Fulfilling Our Ancestors’ Dreams” and “seeks to acknowledge the next generation of Indigenous scholars and community leaders.”

SEE SYMPOSIUM, PAGE 3



United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians Chief Joe Bunch stands onstage at the 49th annual Symposium on the American as he gives remarks for its opening ceremony on April 7. BRITTNEY BENNETT/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

UKB takes lead at Oilers Native American Heritage Night

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT
Editor

TULSA – As the final siren sounded in the Tulsa Oilers 5-3 victory over the Wichita Thunder at the BOK Center on April 1, the team wasn’t the only ones with something to celebrate.

The night was also the Oilers’ second annual Native American Heritage Night, and after months of planning and organizing, UKB Education Director Dr. Leslie Hannah pulled off what he considered to be a “great success” as the lead tribe for the event.

“To be the lead tribe at the event this year, I think it’s an opportunity that gives the UKB a solid footprint in the tribal community of Northeastern Oklahoma,” said Hannah. “For the Tulsa Oilers organization to ask us to take the lead on this, that shows they recognize the UKB

as a legitimate force in the surrounding Native communities. With how the night went, I think it was a great success.”

The Oilers began hosting Native American Heritage Night in 2021 as a way to recognize all 39 tribes in the state and to facilitate an interest in hockey within Indian Country.

Hannah said the night began with a drumming and intertribal dance demonstration on the BOK Center’s main concourse before the game began, which drew a curious crowd.

“The response was awesome,” said Hannah. “There was several, several dozens of people gathered up watching. It was great seeing their reactions because after every dance and song, there was a little roaring of applause and people wanting to take pictures. I appreciate the opportunity the Oilers gave us and I think we

capitalized on it.”

Hannah was also invited to emcee some of the pre-game festivities, including introducing Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche on the stadium’s jumbotron.

“The Native American Heritage night at the Tulsa Oilers was a great experience, as we got the opportunity to offer the public information about the services the tribe offers and also educate them on our history and culture,” said Wacoche. “I look forward to more opportunities like this for the tribe to be recognized for the work we do. Plus, the Oilers won the game, so it was a great night.”

The event also gave an opportunity for the tribe to share some of the Keetoowah language with a wider audience.

SEE OILERS, PAGE 3



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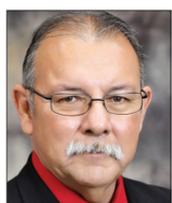


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Laying groundwork for tribal success



Chief's Corner

JOE BUNCH
Principal Chief
jbunch@ukb-nsn.gov

Giduwagi, digowale, siyo, nigada. April has come and gone. Time is flying by. As the old saying goes, April showers bring May flowers.

The Oklahoma State Health Department COVID-19 report for the last four weeks shows activity in following counties: Cherokee County 30 cases, Adair County 11 cases and Delaware County 15 cases. The COVID-19 virus and its variants have not completely gone away. We will see its lingering effects for months and years to come. We know that being vaccinated, washing your hands and distancing from others helps in the prevention of this virus. Please stay vigilant.

I gave a welcome address during the opening of the 49th annual NSU Symposium on the American Indian. The Symposium is open to the public and this year's theme was "Fulfilling Our Ancestors' Dreams."

I attended a presentation, "Teaching and Learning of the Railroad in Indian Country", which was moderated by UKB member Dr. Virginia Whitekiller and presented by Professor Farina King, students, Jarren Fourkiller, Charlee J. Gilliam, and

John Hair Museum Director Ernestine Berry. UKB tribal member Dr. Corey Still also presented "Tricksters of Higher Education." I had a great time!

The programs were not all in a virtual setting. Some presentations were in real time, along with vendors and much information about the American Indian. On the weekend, there was a powwow, gourd dancing, fancy dancing, two-stepping and my favorite, Indigenous foods. Artisans were also presenting their crafts.

Thank you NSU and the Center for Tribal Studies for hosting this event. Much can be learned from these activities and they have memorialized the life and times of the American Indian. So next year around this time, put the 50th annual Symposium on the American Indian on your calendar.

Our Eggstravaganza Easter egg hunt was a huge success! There were several hundred Keetoowah kids and kids from the public between the ages of 1-12 years old on our grounds. There was great weather and it was good to see the little ones come out with parents and grandparents watching. Participants came away with Easter eggs and prizes. Thank you to our employees and volunteers for planning, preparing and coordinating this event, for without your help this would not have been a huge success.

We also attended a series at Bacone College by the United States Department of Agriculture. They informed us and the public of internships and educational opportunities through the USDA. Anyone

wanting a degree in the agricultural field, I encourage you to meet with Dr. Hannah in the UKB Education Department. We met with Bacone officials and the USDA regional and state leadership, discussing partnerships with both the college and the UKB. More to come as it is developed.

We are preparing to attend May's meeting with Eastern Band of Cherokees to celebrate the placing of land in trust for the Keetoowah Mounds in Bryson City, North Carolina. The Keetoowah Mound is one of six mother towns of the Cherokee, built about 1000 CE. It served as a meeting place and cultural center for the Keetoowah People.

We have much to learn from our ancestors and I look forward to this land being preserved for all time.

This administration is working very hard in continuing our relations with the Indian Health Service, US Forestry, USDA, HUD and Department of Interior. The continuing dialog with these agencies has developed a better understanding of who we are and strengthen our government-to-government relations.

Our efforts are shown by our continuing services to our people and we are reaching out for new services. We have a good feeling about where we are and, as always, we have room for expansion in the future.

I am continuing the groundwork for a successful tribal government. My door is always open and keep the United Keetoowah Band and elected officials in your prayers. Wado, dodagohvi.

ELECTION: New qualifications for candidates.

FROM PAGE 1

10 years and any tribal employee who registers as a candidate must take a leave of absence from their employment for the duration of the campaign, except for elected officers.

Voters also have new requirements, including being required to reside within the territory known as the Old Cherokee Nation for their district for a period of six months prior to the election.

In the event an eligible voter moves to an address in a different district during the six months prior to the election, that voter shall not be entitled to vote in the new district until the next election.

The ordinance now also allows for referendum elections, both from tribal members and from the Tribal Council.

Any tribal member may call for a referendum vote by filing a \$500 fee with the Election Board between Feb. 1 and July 30 of the general election year. Once accepted, the petitioner has 30 days to collect the equivalent of 30 percent of eligible voter signatures from the last general election. Once those signatures are verified, the item will be allowed on the election ballot. If at least 50 percent, plus one vote, vote in favor, the vote shall become tribal law.

The Tribal Council may also refer any matter on which it wishes to have a referendum vote to the Election Board. Within 30 days of receiving the referendum resolution from Council, the Election Board shall schedule an election on the Referendum. Any Referendum passed by at least 50 percent, plus one vote, shall become the law of the Tribe.

"This new referendum just allows the people to have more of a vote on issues that are important to them, as well as allows Council to push forward issues that they think the whole tribe should vote on," said Victoria Holland, UKB attorney.

Additional details on other changes to the UKB Election Ordinance will be announced in the coming weeks.

The general election this year will be held on Monday, Nov. 7, 2022.

In other news, Council:

- Approved the UKB Tax Commission report, with \$27,227.11 reported in revenue and of that amount, \$2,773.23 is allotted to the Education Department under the Motor Fuels agreement;

"The people are going to decide no matter what. They're the ones they decide who they want in there. I just want people to know that."

Flint District Rep. Frankie Still

- Approved the treasurer's financial report, which states the Corporate Board paid leases in the amount of \$21,367.08 and the tribe had \$221,620 in expenses due to elder fund disbursements, district discretionary funds and contract services;
- Approved the request for a bank account for the Federal Program accounts under Environmental Services;
- Approved pursuit for National Endowment for the Humanities Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums grant opportunities;
- Approved the creation of a YouTube Channel for the preservation of traditional practices to be recorded and archived under Historic Preservation;
- Approved the occupation of the property at 20525 S. Jules Valdez Rd, Tahlequah, OK 74464 to house Environmental Services and Historic Preservation Departments;
- Approved a development and cooperative agreement with the Intertribal Buffalo Council on a 5 year, renewable lease for 120 acres;
- Approved all future requests for use of Tribal property(s) are to go through the UKB Realty Department with an acquisition form;
- Approved the request for Tribal Development Center Grant under the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust Services;
- Approved the creation of a Farmers Market Program under the Environmental Services Department;
- Approved opening a open a bank account for the Redbud Apartments;
- Approved applying for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Indian and Native American Programs Employment and Training Grant;

- Approved the proposed Election Board Budget for the UKB Election 2022;
- Approved the ratification of the allocation of funds to support renovations at property #1, known as the Kenwood General Store;
- Approved funding opportunity T122013 for Echota Behavioral Health and Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health services for the medicated treatment of opioid addiction;
- Approved funding opportunity HRSA22061 for health resources and service administration for rural communities;
- Tabled a vote that would have made tribal properties under rental agreements pay a rate to the Tribe to take the place of space allocations;
- Tabled a vote to approve or disapprove a partnership with Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge;
- Tabled a vote to approve/disapprove a partnership with US Fish & Wildlife for obtaining waterfowl feathers for distribution to Tribal members annually under the UKB Fish & Wildlife Recreation Codes;
- Approved asserting the civil and criminal jurisdiction of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma within the boundaries of the UKB Cherokee Reservation;
- and proclaimed April as UKB Indian Child Welfare Abuse and Prevention Month.

To view the meeting in its entirety, the public can visit the UKB Facebook Page and see the "Videos" tab. The next regularly scheduled Tribal Council meeting is set for May 7 at 10 a.m. at the UKB Judicial Center (former UKB Wellness Center).

"This new referendum just allows the people to have more of a vote on issues that are important to them, as well as allows Council to push forward issues that they think the whole tribe should vote on."

Victoria Holland, UKB attorney

GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

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opinions of the writer and not necessarily those of the Giduwa Cherokee News editor, staff or tribal administration of the United Keetoowah Band.

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SYMPOSIUM: Still says leadership tied to individual identity.

FROM PAGE 1

According to the symposium website, the theme was inspired by a quote from Dr. Twyla Baker, President of the Nueta Hidatsa Sahnish College: "I am a pre-Columbian, post-modern, walking talking anachronism. A throwback to the future, the dream the old ones dreamed."

Bunch also reflected over the theme and how it affects Native communities as a whole.

"If we're not careful, we'll be forgotten," said Bunch. "That's why this event is important. Much can be learned from these studies and activities, as they both memorialize the life and times of the American Indian, as well as show the future and where we're going. So that's what it's all about, is to renew. We're fulfilling our ancestors' dreams of continued existence by being here and remembering, while also going forward."

Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche also noted how the theme strikes a chord directly with the UKB.

"This year's theme was 'Fulfilling Our Ancestors' Dreams' and we as a tribe continue to work on doing exactly that," he said. "The UKB is the only OIWA Cherokee tribe in the world. Our Cherokee Tribal Roll is the only open and active Cherokee roll in the world that is audited and approved yearly by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Our 1949 UKB Base Roll had 3,700 members and after 72 years, our enrollment is just under 14,000 members. We've continued to fulfill our



From left are Chief Joe Bunch, Miss Indian Oklahoma Madison Whitekiller, Miss Native American NSU Nicollette Stroud and Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche, who were able to talk at the symposium. COURTESY PHOTO/JEFF WACOCHÉ

ancestors' dreams, but we have more work and educating to do. I look forward to the challenge."

Symposium activities included various in-person and online presentations, including "Teaching and Learning about Railroads in Indian Territory."

The presentation was moderated by Keetoowah Virginia Drywater-Whitekiller and included several individuals affiliated with NSU, as well as Ernestine Berry, executive director of the John Hair Cultural

Center and Museum.

The panel detailed the efforts made to collaborate in the learning and teaching of Indigenous perspectives and histories of railroads in Indian territory.

Keetoowah Dr. Corey Still also gave three presentations for the event, including "Identifying the Tricksters of Higher Education," "Intersectionality of Indigenous Language and Culture with Leadership in Higher Education" and "Discussing Indigenous Leadership."

Still was also one of the event's keynote speakers.

"I was honored to speak at the Symposium on the American Indian at NSU," said Still. "I feel it is critical as Indigenous educators to create spaces like this in historically exclusive places for Native people. Education is one of the most influential components of life. We are lifelong learners, whether that be in the classroom or in our daily lives. To have spaces like the symposium for us to gather and be unapologetically Indigenous is extremely special. I was humbled to be asked to lend what knowledge I have to this outstanding event."

If there's one thing Still hopes attendees got from his presentations, it's to celebrate their Native identity.

"One of the key takeaways that I hope those that were able to listen in understood is that as Indigenous people, we should never be made to feel like we must check our Native identity at the door when we enter a space," he said. "We carry our ancestors and their knowledge with us daily, and no institution or place should dictate how we present ourselves in any space. Each of us are leaders in our own right, whether that be in title or in the acts that we do every day within our communities. Leadership is tied to our identities and our identities are composed of our own lived experiences. Never be scared to speak to your experiences and never be scared to represent who you are."

OILERS: The UKB is also planning a Tulsa Drillers event.

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"We had a swag table with some lanyards and Transportation gave me some pom poms to give away, but we also had little language booklets that were really popular," said Hannah. "We had individuals take the language booklets and if I had time, they would come back over and ask me how to pronounce this or that. It was exciting to hear our language being spoken by people who had never even heard of us before."

Hannah also worked with Oilers Corporate Ambassador Nathan Tyahla to receive group ticket pricing for UKB staff, tribal members and their guests. "We had several tribal members there and some UKB staff including Cooweescoowee District Representative Clifford Wofford and Delaware District Representative Caleb Grimmer. We probably had 45 of us altogether. I think it's a great way to get to know your fellow employee, your fellow tribal member. Especially staff,"

The UKB Education Department is next organizing a similar night with the Tulsa Drillers baseball organization on May 13. Details will be announced on the UKB Facebook page at a later date.



The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma was the lead tribe during Native American Heritage Night with the Tulsa Oilers on April 1. In attendance from left are Cooweescoowee District Rep. Clifford Wofford, Education Director Dr. Leslie Hannah and Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche. COURTESY PHOTO/DR. LESLIE HANNAH

HUNT: UKB officers also give away prizes at the event.

FROM PAGE 1

departments and representatives gave gift cards, money, Easter baskets and more. We're a small tribe, but we have that personal touch."

The UKB Tribal Officers also gave out grand prizes including an iPad mini, a Nintendo Switch and two Oculus Rift virtual reality headsets.

Other activities throughout the day included free food and sno-cones, bounce houses, face painting and photographs with the Easter Bunny.

"It was nice to see all our families mingling and participating. I also can't say thank you enough to Sheila Bluebird for being our Easter Bunny in the photo area. That was such a big hit. We were glad to see all the happy faces," said Gourd.

Gourd also took the time to thank her staff, HLDCDC staff and UKB staff for volunteering to help during the event.

"I think we ended up with more than 60 volunteers and we couldn't have done it this big without everybody pitching in," she said. "If everybody's doing those little bitty things that make up this big picture, that's what makes it work. It's everybody putting in those

"I knew we were going to have a good turnout, but even I couldn't have expected the amount of children that came. It was good to see everyone and to be able to do this event for the community."

Kim Gourd, CCDF manager

little pieces that make the whole puzzle come together."

Gourd is already reflecting on how to improve next year's event.

"We had a few hiccups and there was definitely some room for improvement, so we're going to have a follow-up meeting to evaluate and brainstorm on what we can do even better next year," she said. "We're looking at ways to get better organized and have a better sound system, but this event has built a great foundation of camaraderie that will take us into next year's event. I think the staff and children had fun and that's why we do things like this!"

COMPLETING THE CIRCLE

14th Annual Completing the Circle

Indigenous Cultural Awareness Event for Foster Families

Saturday, May 21st, 2022

WHEN: Saturday, May 21st, 2022. 9:00am - 2:00pm.

WHERE: United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees will be hosting this year. 18263 Keetoowah Circle, Tahlequah OK 74464. Follow signs for parking and registration. Registration will start at 8:30 am and opening Ceremony at 9:30.

QUESTIONS: If you have questions please contact Kelly Tannehill (Kelly.Tannehill@okdhs.org) 918-232-8289 or Shawn Shirley (Shawn.Shirley@okdhs.org) 580-761-5731.

CREDITS & TRAVEL: Those attending will get 6 hours of training credits approved. Travel claims will be paid for DHS foster families.

To register for this event, please visit
<https://events.oucpc.org/ctc/registration/>
 Registration will close on Friday May 13th, 2022.

In the event of a surge of COVID cases, you will be notified of any change of plans.

UKB SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS IN OKLAHOMA

Open to Exclusive Keetoowahs 16-21 years old. Must be within age range by June 6, 2022. Apps open until May 4th!

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Through this program, youth will be provided with basic work skills and the good work habits necessary to enter the job market. Participants are permitted to work 5 weeks in the summer and will be paid \$10/hr to work within one of the UKB departments. Training will be provided based on the participant and the tribe's area of service needed.

WHAT'S NEEDED FOR THE APP?

- Utility Bill (water, electric, natural gas) or copy of lease agreement to verify address
- Proof of Income for all adults in household
- Youth aged 16-17 at time of application - parent/guardian must attend to sign documentation

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Applicants applying for youth services must meet supplemental youth eligibility requirements. To determine applicant eligibility for youth employment and training programs, the following documents are required:

- Copy of Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) or Tribal Membership - The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma
- Copy of Photo Identification
- Selective Service - Males 18 years +
- Household income verification (most recent check stub, w2, tax return, etc.)
- Residence Verification - proof of mailing and physical address if different (most recent lease agreement, utility bill, etc.)

Main Line: 918-871-2800
info@ukb-nsn.gov
www.ukb-nsn.gov

Keetoowah Transit driving forward

The Keetoowah Cherokee Tribal Transit Service is open to the public by calling 1-888-866-6705 or 918-871-2790.

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT
Editor

TAHLEQUAH – Since 2010, the Keetoowah Cherokee Tribal Transit Service has helped provide thousands of rides to doctor’s appointments, grocery stores and everything in between for both United Keetoowah Band members and the general public.

“We got our first grant in 2008, but we didn’t actually start giving rides until 2010,” said Toni Workman, Keetoowah Cherokee Tribal Transit Service director. “We actually operated out of the former UKB Wellness Center until 2011, which is when we built our own building. We just had two drivers and a dispatcher then. From there we just kept applying for more grants.”

The service operates with eight employees including a dispatcher, four drivers, a transit specialist and two administrative directors. The department was also recently awarded a Federal Transit Administration grant that will allow for the hiring of an additional driver.

Transit service is open to the public in Tahlequah and Stilwell by calling 1-888-866-6705 or 918-871-2790.

One-way fares can range from \$1 to a destination in city limits up to \$20 for transportation as far away as Tulsa. Tahlequah transit services are offered Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of a lunch break for drivers from 12 to 1 p.m. Mondays are considered “Courtesy Appointment Days” in which riders can request roundtrip transportation to medical appointments, while Tuesday through Friday are demand-response request hours. The last call taken for transportation outside city limits is 2 p.m. and in city limits is 4 p.m.

Stilwell transit services are offered Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays only from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., with the exception of a lunch break for drivers from 12 to 1 p.m. The last call taken for transportation outside city limits is 2 p.m. and in city limits is 4 p.m.

A cancellation notice is required 24 hours before a scheduled ride is to take place. If a passenger has a record of three no-shows for scheduled rides, UKB Transit has the authority to revoke the passenger’s ability to receive transportation in the future.

Since opening its doors more than a decade ago, the service has expanded its fleet from two commercial buses to six vans to accommodate passengers, especially those with disabilities, according to Transportation Assistant Director Ashley Hopton.

“Per Federal Transit Administration requirements, all of our vehicles meet the accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act,” she said. “Four of our smaller vans have rear access wheelchair ramps in the back. We are also in the process of acquiring two



The Keetoowah Cherokee Tribal Transit Service has been in operation for more than a decade and has grown to eight employees. From left are Transportation Specialist Holly Noe, Drivers Leroy Hicks and Barbara Weavel, Transportation Assistant Director Ashley Hopton, Transportation Director Toni Workman and Driver Billy Robinson. Not pictured are Joe Proctor and Jennifer Ludlow. PHOTOS BY BRITTNEY BENNETT/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

“We’ve really grown and I’m proud of my staff for their hard work and dedication to serving our surrounding communities, especially amid the pandemic.”
Toni Workman, Keetoowah Cherokee Tribal Transit Service director



The Keetoowah Cherokee Tribal Transit Service is open to the public and operates in both Tahlequah and Stilwell. One-way fares can range from \$1 to a destination in city limits and up to \$20 for transportation as far away as Tulsa.

larger vans to accommodate wider wheelchairs and those will also have an automatic lift and a handrail to help people board.”

Certified service animals are allowed with a passenger if in a crate, but only after showing proof of certification. Emotional support animals are not allowed.

“The animal must be officially trained and certified and for the safety of our driver, and other people on board, we do request that the animal be in a crate,” said Hopton. “If passengers have questions about this or transit in general, we encourage them to get in touch with us before requesting a ride because we do have guidelines.”

Passengers are also expected to adhere to Transit policy, including prompt payment of fare, wearing a seat-belt, no tobacco, drug or alcohol use while riding and no food or drinks unless in a container or grocery bag.

Passengers are also responsible for providing a car or booster seat if a child is riding with them. Children 16 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

Like most businesses, Keetoowah Cherokee Tribal Transit Services was also impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It has adjusted its fleet to assure riders of its commitment to safety, including requiring masks, as well as installing air filters and plexiglass for the protection of both the driver and passenger. Only single passengers are allowed at this time, though up to three individuals can ride together if from the same household.

“I’m proud that we’ve come so far from where we started,” said Workman. “We’ve really grown and I’m proud of my staff for their hard work and dedication to serving our surrounding communities, especially amid the pandemic.”

For a list of fares and schedules, visit www.ukb-nsn.gov/transit.

Echota Village, RV Park float season opens May 13

To see park rates or to book a reservation, guests can visit www.echotavillagerv.com.

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT
Editor

TAHLEQUAH – Floaters, kayakers, and campers alike are invited to spend their summer vacations with the Echota Village and RV Park, which begins its floating season on May 13.

“It’s just a great place to be. It’s a beautiful, beautiful place,” said Woody Anderson, UKB Corporate Board executive director. “We’ve got a really great property and we want people to come in and fill up our parking lot. We offer several amenities to be able to take care of everybody and our staff is ready to show our guests a great time.”

Echota Village officially opened on May 24, 2019, and is located at 16315 Hwy 10 in Tahlequah along the Illinois River.

Floating season officially begins on May 13 and will allow guests to rent kayaks and eight-person rafts, which are also self-bailing rafts with an extra layer on the floor allowing water to exit under it. The park also offers a private shuttle service to and from the Illinois River.

Other amenities of the park include a primitive camping area and 16 recreational vehicle slips with 30-amp hook-ups that are already open for reservation as of April 8.

“We have 16 slots with electrical hook-ups and a central dump station to serve those slots,” said Anderson. “We also have a bathhouse with hot showers. A lot of places along the river do not offer that. We also have really nice restrooms that people can use whether they’re out there primitive camping or if they’re staying in an RV. We want to go that extra mile.”

A store is also on site for needs including firewood and ice, as well as smaller items including drinks and candy.

The park is a business venture of the UKB Corporate Board under Resolution 18-UKBCB-1 and is in its second year of operations under a new board.

“We have a fairly new board, but we’ve already had a year of operation, so we know some things that we ran into,” said Anderson. “We gained a lot of experience



The Echota Village and RV Park offers kayak and raft rentals for guests, including 20, eight-person rafts that are also self-bailing with an extra layer on the floor to allow water to exit underneath. A private shuttle service is also available to transport guests to and from the Illinois River. PHOTOS BY BRITTNEY BENNETT/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS



The Echota Village and RV Park opened for business in 2019 and is located at 16315 Hwy 10 in Tahlequah along the Illinois River.

last year and we know the things that we can improve on going into year two. When our guests leave, I want them to walk away feeling like they had a great experience with us and that includes great customer service.”

UKB Corporate Board Operations Manager Shelbi Doyeto agrees. She said this year the board will be making a priority of keeping the campground pristine for all visitors.

“At one point, we kind of were not the ‘family place,’ but we’ve flipped the script on that really quick,” said Doyeto. “Once we heard that, we made it a goal to make it a family place and the number one thing, believe it or not, is keeping the restrooms clean. That will be a priority this year.”

The board will also emphasize general cleanliness on the river to all guests. “The Grand River Dam Authority has

“When our guests leave, I want them to walk away feeling like they had a great experience with us and that includes great customer service.”
Woody Anderson, UKB Corporate Board executive director

a lot of responsibility on the river with safety and making sure its clean, so we want to take that seriously,” said Doyeto. “It’s a big responsibility and we think about that when we have guests come visit us. We provide everyone a complimentary trash bag when they go down the river to keep all their trash in.”

Safety will also be a priority for guests floating or kayaking on the river.

“Arrest rates go up dramatically when floating season starts because of alcohol. As operators, we want to educate our guests on safety,” said Doyeto. “It’s almost a life and death issue because we have the responsibility to make sure that our guests are not abusing alcohol on the river. We don’t want any accidents and last year we didn’t have any issues, so we want that to continue. We want to be good stewards of doing our part to help keep the river and our guests safe.”

As for the future of the Echota Village and RV Park, the board is planning carefully.

“We are looking to add a stage for live entertainment and cultural demonstrations. Hopefully we can get that done later in the season. There’s other activities that we’ve also discussed, such as a zip line,” said Anderson. “My thought is always how can we maximize the return on that property? We’re already looking at what we can do to expand our offerings as part of the board’s planning.”

During the season, the Echota Village and RV Park is open Friday through Sunday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and by reservation only Monday through Thursday.

For park rates or to book a reservation, guests can visit www.echotavillagerv.com. For more information, call 918-871-2864.

Foreman fulfills Miss Keetoowah dream

Kitana Foreman was crowned Miss Keetoowah on Oct. 3, 2021, bringing her childhood hope of winning the title full circle.

TAHLEQUAH – Kitana Foreman can still remember attending the Miss and Jr. Miss Keetoowah Pageants when she was only 7 years old.

“When I was younger, my mom was always taking me to the pageants because my aunt used to be one of the judges,” she said. “One of the former Miss Keetoowahs came to speak to me once during a pageant and she told me that I could absolutely be Miss Keetoowah myself one day. Just seeing how she held herself and how passionate she was and how she cared for the kids, it made me want it too.”

Foreman, now 21, finally came full circle on October 3, 2021, when she was crowned the new Miss Keetoowah.

“When they called my name, I was just so happy,” said Foreman. “It was like a dream and it’s still hard for me to grasp it at times, that I’m actually in the same role of the young woman that I looked up to. It’s a big honor for

me and it’s such a big honor to represent my family and my tribe.”

Foreman said she has grown up traditionally thanks to her parents, who made sure she knew about stomp dances and traditional foods, but she was most nervous about the language aspect of the Miss Keetoowah competition.

“My mom is Choctaw and she speaks, but I had to go to my family members on my dad’s side because they speak fluent Cherokee. I told them that I wanted to learn the language and become more comfortable with trying to speak it, because I need to learn the language. They were all helping me and were happy and proud I wanted to do this.”

Foreman has an interest in helping Native youth in her role as Miss Keetoowah. As part of her platform, she will focus on combating suicide in Native youth.

“I went to a conference where I learned that Native American children have one of the highest rates of suicide. For Native youth ages 10-24, suicide is the second leading cause of death, which is 2.5 times higher than the national average,” she said. “After hearing that,

I’ve really become passionate about wanting to help and let them

know they have a purpose.”

As part of her efforts, Foreman is planning to organize an art show later this year. “I want to put together an art show that asks youth to showcase something that they stand for, something that allows them to express themselves and their feelings,” she said. “Art can be healing and help with mental health, just getting things out. By doing an art show, it lets them know not to be ashamed and that there is help and to ask for it. I also want them to know there is a whole tribe behind them and if they just get involved, they will see how much they matter.”

Foreman also plans to use her platform to help raise awareness for the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women movement.

“As Miss Keetoowah, I also want to bring awareness to the higher level of violence that our Native women experience,” she said. “I want to inspire all Native youth and I want our young Keetoowah women to feel strong, confident and proud of being Keetoowah. I want them to know there is sunshine in the darkness and they can be the sunshine our people need.”

Foreman is currently attending Tulsa Community College to get her associate’s degree in business. Upon completion, she has plans to transfer to the University of Oklahoma where she tentatively plans to pursue a law degree.

“I haven’t decided exactly what path I want to take, but I’m very interested in tribal law,” she said. “I know the chief has really talked to me about it and I’ve always been interested in serving however I can. Since McGirt, tribes are needing more help with the courts and help with sovereignty issues. I have a big interest in that and a lot of the tribe has been supportive, including Dr. Hannah in the Education Department.”

Regardless of wherever she travels, Foreman plans to keep the tribe close.

“My biggest goal as Miss Keetoowah will always be showing the Keetoowah culture to others and bringing more awareness to who we are. I’ll be attending a lot of powwows this summer and if someone doesn’t know who the Keetoowahs are, I’ll be there to represent us.”

“I want to inspire all Native youth and I want our young Keetoowah women to feel strong, confident and proud of being Keetoowah.”
Miss Keetoowah
Kitana Foreman

As Miss Keetoowah, Kitana Foreman’s platforms include combating Native youth suicide and raising awareness for the Missing Murdered Indigenous Women movement.
BRITTNEY BENNETT/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS



WALKED ON

For a free Walked On listing, send the deceased United Keetoowah Band member’s name, birth date and death date to Giduwa Cherokee News Editor Brittney Bennett at bennett@ukb-nsn.com.

Jefferson Adair
Oct. 14, 1953 – April 3, 2022

Kenneth Jones
Feb. 20, 1960 – Feb. 6, 2022

Carl Wayne Proctor
Jan. 14, 1953 – April 9, 2022

Carolyn Castillo
Oct. 28, 1955 – March 27, 2022

Claudette Elaine Reasor
Sept. 1, 1951 – April 10, 2022

Terra Eli
March 13, 1973 – March 12, 2022

Leona Mae Cochran
Aug. 10, 1959 – March 25, 2022

Jennie Marie Foreman
Sept. 8, 1940 – March 16, 2022

Kristie Sands
April 27, 1975 – Feb. 28, 2022

Paul Pritchett
July 10, 1964 – March 18, 2022

Thomas Sequoyah Ketcher
Dec. 25, 1966 – March 25, 2022



LUNCH MENU

The United Keetoowah Band’s Title VI Lunch Menu for May 2022 at Jim Proctor Community Center located at 555 Fake St. in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. For information, call 918-871-2860.

Currently the dining room is closed to the public and will remain so until further notice. Park in the drive-thru area for your meal delivery. Meals are free to Keetoowahs 55 and older, as well as their spouses. Members of other tribes and their spouses must show their CDIB card and contribute to the cost of a meal. Guest meals are \$5, while meals for children 0-17 are \$3. If you feel sick, stay home. Wash your hands and practice social distancing to help avoid the spread of COVID-19 and its variants. Wado for your understanding.

May 2
Beef tips w/Rice/Gravy
Mixed vegetables
Texas toast
Dessert

May 6
Mother’s Day
Special lunch

May 12
Chicken n’ dumplings
Green beans
Corn, hot roll
Dessert

May 18
Spaghetti w/meat sauce
Italian green beans
Salad, garlic toast
Dessert

May 24
Country fried steak
Mashed potato/gravy
Peas/carrots
Hot roll, dessert

May 30
Tribal offices closed
Memorial Day

May 3
Homemade meatloaf
Mashed potatoes
Yellow squash
Hot roll, dessert

May 9
Turkey/cheese wrap
Broccoli mac salad
Potato chips
Dessert

May 13
Cook’s choice

May 19
Brown beans
Fried potatoes, okra
Cornbread
Dessert

May 25
Hamburgers w/fixings
Steak fries
Birthday cake
Ice cream

May 31
Chicken strips
Mashed potato/gravy
Mixed vegetables
Bread, dessert

May 4
Sloppy Joes
French fries
Pork n’ beans
Dessert

May 10
Baked pork chops
Mashed potato/gravy
Baby carrots
Hot roll, dessert

May 16
Loaded spud
Chef salad
Cupcake
Soda

May 20
Pizza
French fries
Caesar salad
Dessert

May 26
Kitchen closed
Cleaning day

May 5
Pork tamales
Mexican corn
Spanish rice
Sopapilla w/honey

May 11
Stuffed green pepper
Rice pilaf
Cauliflower
Hot roll, dessert

May 17
Oven fried chicken
Mashed potato/gravy
Corn, hot roll
Dessert

May 23
Veggie-hamburger stew
Hominy
Cornbread
Dessert

May 27
Tribal offices closed
Employee Appreciation



Catron earns CDL via Arbuckle agreement

Chester Catron finishes the course in just four weeks, earning his Class A Commercial Driver's License.

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT
Editor

TAHLEQUAH – After four weeks of intense classroom and hands-on instruction, Chester Catron has become the first Keetoowah to graduate with his Class A Commercial Driver's License from the Arbuckle Truck Driving School in Tulsa.

A recent partnership between Arbuckle and the United Keetoowah Band Education Department made it possible for Catron to take the course at a discounted rate of \$5,900, more than \$600 off normal course costs.

For Education Director Dr. Leslie Hannah, Catron's accomplishment also felt like a personal victory.

"When I found out, there was a moment of celebration where I was just as happy for him as I think he was for himself," said Hannah. "He's a pioneer. Somebody has to go first and I was really rooting for him. He mentioned he had been having a rough time lately and told me that he's just so thankful and appreciative for helping him. It's a win for all of us."

Catron also earned the "Top Dawg" award during his exam, which is awarded to the highest scorer in the class.

Upon graduation, he was presented with job offers from multiple trucking companies.

"He got offers from at least six different places before even walking out the



United Keetoowah Band member Chester Catron was gifted a cake from the UKB Education Department during a reception held in his honor on April 1 in Tahlequah. BRITTNEY BENNETT/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

**"He's a pioneer. Somebody has to go first and I was really rooting for him."
Dr. Leslie Hannah, UKB Education Department director**

door," said Hannah. "He told me that's the biggest problem he's had throughout the whole process, being overwhelmed with deciding who to go to work for. It's the best kind of problem."

To celebrate, the Education Department hosted a reception for Catron on April 1 complete with cake and punch. Various UKB departments also attended to help celebrate.

Hannah has high hopes it won't be the last celebration the department hosts.

"It's a goal of mine to get as many Keetoowahs into as many different professions as I possibly can, with what resources I have. I can't turn out truck drivers and lawyers and doctors every 15 minutes, but I'm going to try. This is

proof that Keetoowahs can accomplish great things," he said.

Other Keetoowahs looking to start a career in the trucking industry are encouraged to reach out to the UKB Education Department.

The CDL certification course starts a new session each Monday in Tulsa and runs Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. for four weeks.

Students will complete all necessary paperwork and pass a physical and drug screening in week one. Weeks two and three will teach students how to pre-trip a truck and practice basic driving skills on a driving pad. By week four, students will be driving in the Tulsa area with an instructor to prepare for the final exam.

The final exam is both written and practical. It is completed on site using an Arbuckle truck and is scored by a certified Department of Public Safety official.

The course is limited to five students at a time and does not require any previous experience.

Arbuckle Truck Driving School Director Amber Ennis said she was "thrilled" for Hannah to reach out and propose a partnership.

"We were thrilled to have the opportunity to tell Dr. Hannah about what we can offer because there is such a driver shortage right now," she said. "We have recruiters coming to us looking for drivers. There's something for everybody, whether it's over the road, small businesses, local driving... We provide a number of resources so when students are ready, they have the knowledge to make the best decision for themselves."

Hannah is just as excited for the possibilities that await Keetoowahs who choose to go through the course.

"I don't know of anything else, where if you don't know one end of the truck from the other, just four weeks later you're able to be out on the road driving as a career," he said. "If you successfully complete the course, you're going to have a career behind the wheel of something. Some of the starting salaries are like \$60,000 and if students want to continue their education and get different levels of driving endorsements, they can do that."

Keetoowahs interested in the course can get more information by visiting www.atds-cei.com.

Exclusive Keetoowahs can also apply for a scholarship directly from the UKB Education Department to help with the cost of the course.

Applications can be obtained at the Education building located at 4547 S. Whitmore Lane in Tahlequah or by calling 918-871-2796.

SPRING 2022 KEETOOWAH GRADUATES



Aspen Kortni Elizabeth Ford
Northeastern State University

Aspen will graduate from Northeastern State University with a bachelor's degrees in media studies and Spanish.

The family of Aspen Kortni Elizabeth Ford are proud to announce her graduation from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah this spring. She will be graduating with her Bachelor of Arts in Media Studies, as well as Bachelor of Arts in Spanish with a minor in Applied Linguistics.

Ford was awarded the President's Leadership Class Scholarship during her time at NSU and is a member of the Alpha Omicron Pi sorority. She has also served as

president for the Spanish Club and treasurer for the Applied Linguistics Club, as well as been inducted into Sigma Delta Pi. She has also been given an Honor Society Award and received the National Honorary Hispanic Society Award on behalf of the Spanish Department.

During her freshmen year, Ford also participated in a study abroad program and attended the spring semester at the University of Puerto Rico in San Juan. She was able to use this op-

portunity to develop her Spanish language skills and study the culture. She has also participated in a program that allowed her to live with a host family in San Pedro, Laguna Guatemala during the summer of 2019. Residing in Guatemala extended her opportunities to study and practice other dialects and cultures.

Ford's college experiences have guided her towards a need to help others with their challenges and tell their stories.

After graduation, Aspen will pursue a career in investigative journalism and is considering the possibility of applying to law school at the University of Tulsa.



Bobby N. Spradlin
Sequoyah High School

Bobby will graduate from Sequoyah High School in Tahlequah. His future plans include obtaining his CDL.

The family of Bobby N. Spradlin are proud to announce his grad-

uation from Sequoyah High School this spring. Spradlin is the son of Kris-sy and JB Spradlin.

He enjoys spending time with his family and driving his truck. Upon graduation, he will continue his education at Indian Capital Technology Center in Tahlequah in the Auto Mechanics, Automotive and Collision program. In the future, he plans to obtain his CDL.



Zayden Dreadfulwater Salina

Zayden will graduate from Locust Grove High School. He will attend Haskell Indian Nations University this fall.

The family of Zayden

Dreadfulwater are proud to announce his gradua-

tion from Locust Grove High School this spring. He is from Salina, Oklahoma, and the son of the late Wauneta Henson and grandson of Bennie and Carolyn Henson. He will be attending Haskell Indian Nations University this fall.



Lillian Sue Davis
James Madison High School

Lillian will graduate with cum laude honors from James Madison High School. She plans to attend Northwest Vista Community College this fall.

The family of Lillian Sue Davis are proud to

announce her graduation from James Madison High

School this spring. She will graduate with cum laude honors. She plans to attend Northwest Vista Community College in San Antonio this fall to continue her love of art and study 3-D animation.



Mackayla Buzzard
Ketchum

Mackayla will graduate from Ketchum Middle School as three-year member of the Ketchum Junior High Honor Society.

The family of Mackayla Buzzard are proud to announce her graduation from Ketchum Middle School this spring. During this time, Buzzard was a three-year member of the

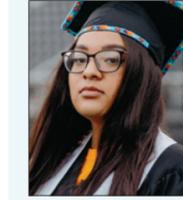
Ketchum Junior High Honor Society, Student of the Month and member of the STEM Club.

She also had the unique opportunity to attend Space Camp at NASA's Johnson Space Center

in Houston, Texas. In addition to academics, Buzzard also placed in the Lucky 7 Conference Cross Country Track Meet.

Buzzard is 14 years old and will be attending Ketchum High School this fall. She is also a member of the Cooweescoowee District.

The family is very proud of her accomplishments and encourages her to reach for the stars.



Brianne Wofford

Brianne's family says it is proud of her and couldn't be happier.

The family of Brianne Wofford are proud to

announce her graduation this spring.

The family would like to relay the following: What a proud day! We just couldn't be happier for you. Best wishes for your next adventure flying eagle. God Bless and we love you!



Tsu-tli J. Christie
Fort Gibson

Tsu-tli will graduate from Fort Gibson Public School's kindergarten and wants to join the Army when he grows up.

The family of Tsu-tli J. Christie are proud to

announce his graduation from kindergarten at Fort Gibson Public Schools

this spring.

Tsu-tli loves Pokémon, hibachi steak, playing guitar and spending time with his brothers.

When he grows up, he wants to join the U.S. Army like his mother and father.



Keiden Ballou
Locust Grove High School

Keiden will graduate from Locust Grove High School. He plans to attend Rogers State University this fall.

The family of Keiden Ballou are proud to announce his graduation from Locust Grove High School this spring.

During his time in school, Ballou won a poetry contest and participated in basketball all four years of high school. An avid guitar player

since eighth grade, he also plays shows in Tulsa and for his church.

He will be attending Rogers State University this fall with plans to major in education.

Ballou would also like to thank his great-grandparents for their support for both him and his siblings and hopes to repay them one day.



David Israel Garza
Anderson, Missouri

David will graduate from McDonald County High School this spring and plans to become a real estate agent.

The family of David Israel Garza are proud to

announce his graduation from McDonald County

High School in Anderson, Missouri, this spring.

Garza has participated in powerlifting while in school and is a lifelong member of New Life Church.

His future plans include becoming a real estate agent.

GOOD LUCK, GRADUATES!