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GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

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Inherently Sovereign: Celebrating 75 years

The 75th Annual Keetoowah Celebration will be held October 4th.

Chief Jeff Wacoche gives his address at the 74th Annual Keetoowah Celebration.

Sneak peek of last year's car show.

Bingo was a hit at the 74th Annual Keetoowah Celebration.

LANI HANSEN, Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians invites all tribal members and non-members to its 75th Annual Keetoowah Celebration, held on the first weekend of October.

This year's theme "Inherently Sovereign" was chosen by the celebration committee members, employees who volunteered with planning the big day. The event is held every year honoring October 3, 1950, when the United Keetoowah Band officially voted to have its constitution and bylaws ratified.

Generations and generations of Keetoowah people have been coming out to this celebration every year. This year the committee wanted it to be special as we are celebrating 75 years. Like previous years the celebration has a full list of activities and events planned for pre-celebration and the day of celebration.

If you do not have anything planned on the evening of September 27, the Jr. Miss and Miss Keetoowah Pageant will take place at The Venue starting at 6p.m. The Keetoowah Golf Tournament will take place at the Pryor Creek Golf Course in Pryor with Seniors (60+) in the morning and the 2-man scramble in the afternoon on October 2. The golf tournament continues as the 4-man scramble will take place on October 3. Sign-ups begin September 1 for the golf tournament.

On October 2, Chief's Dignitary Dinner will take place with an invite only. This year, the committee added an open mic gospel singing on October 3, beginning at 7p.m. at the celebration pavilion. The chili supper and stomp dance will be on October 3, with supper at 7p.m. and stomp at 9p.m.

See CELEBRATION, Page 2

UKB Condemns Secret Legislative Attempt to Terminate UKB Land Rights

The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians (UKB) is calling for the immediate retraction of proposed congressional language – proposed in secret by Oklahoma Senator Markwayne Mullin at the request of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma (CNO) – that would terminate UKB land and economic development rights within the Oklahoma Cherokee Reservation.

The provision, which the UKB obtained only through a Freedom of Information Act request, seeks to redefine who is recognized as Cherokee under federal law, undermining the UKB's sovereignty, identity, and legal standing. The draft legislative provision would strip the UKB of its ability to gain trust land.

"This is not a policy disagreement. This is a deliberate, targeted act of tribal termination by the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma leadership through CNO Senator Mullin," said UKB Chief Jeff Wacoche. "The draft language is a blatant betrayal of the U.S. government's trust responsibility, a violation of federal law, and an attack on tribal sovereignty. It undermines the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling the UKB can have lands held in trust and the reaffirmation of the Department of Interior M-Opinion that the UKB is a successor in interest to the Cherokee treaties."

The UKB also publicly discredited recent claims from the CNO regarding federal court, congressional, and executive branch positions. The tribe points to three indisputable facts:

• **Congress** formally recognized the UKB in 1950. Act of August 10, 1946.

• **Federal courts** — including the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit — confirmed the UKB's entitlement to lands held in trust, a decision the U.S. Supreme Court let stand. *Cherokee Nation v. Bernhardt*, 946 F.3d 1222 (10th Cir. 2019), cert denied.

• The **U.S. Department of the Interior** reaffirmed earlier this year through M-Opinion M-37084 that rights over the Oklahoma Cherokee Reservation are shared equally by the UKB and CNO.

"These facts completely dismantle the CNO's narrative," Chief Wacoche said. "If our rights truly didn't exist, they wouldn't need to attempt to erase us through legislation." The UKB is urging members of Congress, tribal nations across Indian Country, and all Americans who value sovereignty to demand the withdrawal of the proposed language from any appropriations bill and to oppose any attempt to erase a sovereign Native nation.

UKB leaders are also calling on all tribal members to act now by contacting Senator Mullin's office directly to voice their opposition to this harmful proposal, and by reaching out to CNO leadership to insist they end their support for any legislation that would diminish the rights of the UKB. "This is about more than the UKB," Wacoche said. "If this attack succeeds here, it can happen to any tribe in the United States."

TAKE ACTION: Please visit https://www.ukb-nsn.gov/DefendUKBRights and send a letter to Sentor Mullin remanding he retract this legislative provision.

Groundbreaking on UKB First Council House

The Historic Council House will include four offices and council chambers for meetings.

LANI HANSEN, Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- It was a monumental day as the United Keetoowah Band Tribal Officials were joined by tribal employees on the groundbreaking of their own administration building.

"This will be our very first council house," Chief Jeff Wacoche said. "It is very monumental since the first tribal council meetings in 1859 is when the first constitution was written and approved back in the woods. Later in the years, meetings were held at different houses. So, to have this new council house will be historic."

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on August 7, with MASKA Builders a Native American Enterprise. Chief Wacoche was joined by current and former council as they shared what this meant to them.

Currently the tribal council meet in the UKB Wellness Center on the complex on the first Saturday of each month. The council sits four officers including the chief, assistant chief, secretary and treasurer as well as nine district representatives. The four officers are housed in the UKB Federal Services building until the new building is ready for move in.

The new council house will have four offices inside which will house the chief, assistant chief, secretary and treasurer. This will include the council chambers with a seating gallery, for council meetings.

No expected date on when this new building will be completed, but the UKB Tribal Council are happy about having their own place.

The four officers were joined by current and former council for the groundbreaking.

The current council with MASKA Builders representatives at the groundbreaking ceremony.

Current and former council gather to celebrate this historic event on the new council house.

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September Edition

Chief's Corner

JEFF WACOCHE
Principal Chief
jwacoche@ukb-nsn.gov

By: UKB Chief Jeff Wacoche

Our work together as a sovereign people continues on many fronts, from defending our rights in Washington to celebrating the growth of our communities here at home. This month, I want to share updates on the proposed legislative language from Senator Mullin, the opening of our Saline District Community Center, and the groundbreaking for our new Council House.

Protecting Our Sovereignty in Congress

Recently, we learned that legislative language has been secretly proposed to be added to federal budget legislation by Senator Markwayne Mullin that would strip away rights of the UKB. This provision is an attempt to circumvent the courts, the Department of the Interior, and the Senator himself by undermining our sovereignty through the back door. Let me be clear: we will not stand by while our federally recognized rights – confirmed by history, Congress, and the courts – are attacked. Our Tribal Officers, legal and public affairs teams are actively fighting this, and I encourage every member to contact both Senator Mullin and Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma leadership to oppose this harmful language. Please visit https://www.ukb-nsn.gov/DefendUKBRights and send a letter to Senator Mullin demanding he retract this legislative provision.

A Place for Community – Saline District

Amid this fight, we also celebrate progress. Last month, we opened the new Saline District Community Center – a place built by and for our people. This center will serve as a hub for cultural programs, community gatherings, and essential services. It represents the strength of our community spirit and the resilience that has carried us through generations. I want to thank everyone who helped make this project possible, from our Council to the local crews who worked tirelessly to bring this vision to life.

Building the Future – New Council House

Finally, we have broken ground on our new Council House, located on our trust land. This building will be more than a seat of government – it will be a visible and lasting symbol of our sovereignty and self-governance. This milestone is a reminder that every battle we fight in court, in Congress, or in the community is about securing a future where the UKB controls its own destiny.

Our path is not always easy, but it is always worth it. Together, we honor our ancestors, defend our sovereignty, and build a stronger future for our children and grandchildren.

Celebrating 6th Anniversary: 10th Circuit Court of Appeals Affirms UKB Land in Trust Rights

Six years ago, on September 5, 2019, UKB sovereignty and treaty rights were affirmed through the Courts. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit ruled that the UKB could take 76 acres of land in Tahlequah into trust.

This victory was a declaration of sovereignty, self-determination, and perseverance, presaging the later affirmation by the Department of the Interior of the UKB's rights and authority as a successor in interest to the Cherokee Treaties. The land, purchased by the UKB in 2000 and home to essential cultural, community, and Member services, is protected in perpetuity. Placing it into trust not only preserves it for generations to come but also opened access to federal programs, grants, and resources that have strengthened the Tribe's health, education, housing, and cultural preservation efforts.

The path to land in trust was filled with obstacles. The UKB applied in 2004 to have the land taken into trust, a process approved by the

Bureau of Indian Affairs years later. Legal challenges from the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma soon followed, arguing erroneously the Tribe lacked the authority to pursue trust status without its consent. In 2017, a federal district court sided against the UKB, halting progress.

Undeterred, the UKB appealed. The Tenth Circuit's ruling was decisive: the UKB's rights under the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936 include the same trust-land provisions available to tribes under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. The court also rejected the argument that CNO "consent" was needed before the Secretary of the Interior could act.

In the six years since that ruling, the UKB has moved forward with determination. Freed from the financial burden of property taxes and empowered with new funding opportunities, the Tribe has invested in infrastructure, expanded services for Members, and continued to safeguard Keetoowah traditions. Each step builds on the foundation that decision laid, reinforcing the UKB's ability to chart its own course.

Now, the UKB faces a new challenge. As the Department of Interior considers the UKB application for trust lands for gaming, the CNO and Sen. Markwayne Mullin are working to stand in the way of our progress by proposing secret legislative language to harm the UKB. The secret legislative language is a direct attack on UKB sovereignty and would restrict the UKB's ability to have lands taken intro trust for gaming – halting our economic development opportunities.

To learn more and speak up as Keetoowah people, visit ukb-nsn.gov/DefendUKBRights.

CELEBRATION

All regular activities begin on Saturday, October 4 at the celebration grounds. There will be the annual car show/truck show/bike show, kids fishing derby starting at 8a.m. The annual stickball tournament will begin at 9p.m. The committee also added a fun little activity, turtle races so be sure to start picking up turtles as you see them, this will be at 10a.m. Events following throughout the day are cornstalk shoot, volleyball, marbles, arts & crafts vendors, kid's activities, chunky, horseshoes and blowguns.

The 11a.m. activities consist of Chief's address, crowning of the new UKB Ambassadors, tradition keepers and gospel singing. The traditional meal will be served at noon. Cornhole tournament begins at 1p.m. Bingo starts at 2p.m.

There will be a special movie screening going on all day at the museum. The museum will also be hosting a quilt show which will run from October 4-October 31. If you want to learn how to access Dawes Allotment packets and locate those allotments on a map, there will be two presentations located at the UKB Education Building, 10a.m. and 2p.m.

The UKB is looking forward to this year's celebration, so bring the whole family out and let's make this one memorable.

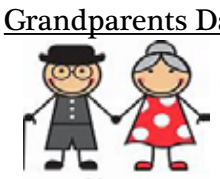
For more information, email lgodwin@ukb-nsn.gov.

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 - $1.00 FOR EACH TO GO MEAL
All Meals Subject to Change Without Notice***



UKB 55+, SPOUSES = FREE, CDIB 55+ & SPOUSE MUST CONRIBUTE TO COST OF MEAL $1.00 EACH MEAL, GUEST $5.00/Child 0-12 $3.00

September 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Jim Proctor Elder Community Center 918-871-2747 918-871-2861	1 UKB TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED 	2 Telephone Tuesday Goulash Italian Green Beans Garlic Bread Stick Peaches	3 Skyscraper Day Meatball Sub Onion Rings Italian Pasta Salad Pineapple Cake	4 Wildlife Day “Cooks Choice”	5 Day of Charity Biscuits N Gravy Scrambled Eggs Bacon, Hashbrowns Juice, Melon Mix	6 UKB Regular Council Meeting 10 AM Justice Center Read a Book
7 Grandparents Day 	8 Star Trek Day Nutrition Center Closed Training	9 When Pigs Fly Day Nutrition Center Closed Training	10 Swap Ideas Day Nutrition Center Closed Training	11 Patriot Day Nutrition Center Closed Training	12 R U OK? Day Nutrition Center Closed Training	13 Hug Your Boss Day 
14 Gobstopper Day  Jaw Breaker	15 Greenpeace Day Chicken Strips w/ Dip Tatar Tots Mac N Cheese Bread Stick, Fruit	16 Collect Rocks Day Beef Tacos Spanish Rice Mexican Corn Fresh Pineapple	17 Constitution Day Hamburger Steak Mashed Pot/Gravy Carrots, Roll Cherry Cheesecake	18 Old Friend Day Brown Beans w/ Ham Fried Potatoes Hominy, Cornbread Jello-w/Fruit	19 Raspberry Day Pancakes Scrambled Eggs Sausage, Potato’s Juice, Mix Fruit	20 Batman Day 
21 Nat. Dance Day 	22 Fall Equinox Day Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce Italian Green Beans Garlic Toast, Fruit	23 Nat. Checkers Day Meat/Cheese Nachos Mexican Rice Ranch Beans Fruit Salad	24 Cherries Jubilee Baked Chicken/ Gravy Boiled Potato Corn on Cob Roll, Fresh Fruit	25 World Dream Day SEPT. BIRTHDAY’S Cheeseburgers French Fries Cake/Ice Cream	26 Love Note Day Kitchen Closed Cleaning Day	27 Nat. Scarf Day 
28 World Rivers Day 	29 Confucius Day UKB Tribal Offices Celebration Monday Work Week Tuesday - Saturday	30 Love People Day Hamburger Stew Commodity Cheese Hominy Cornbread, Pears	Please check on your elders and neighbors Wado	  FlowerAster/ Cosmos		TORNADO WARNING BE AWARE, TAKE SHELTER, UKB LIGHTHORSE

Protect yourself! Stay home if you feel sick! Thank you for your patience and understanding - Title VI Staff - 2% Milk, coffee, tea! “September is National Happy Cat Month” September’s name comes from the Latin word “septem” meaning seven! September’s full Moon, the Corn Moon, reaches illumination Sunday, September 7, at 2:09 PM “There are flowers enough in the summertime, more flowers than I can remember, but none with the purple, gold and red. That dye the flowers of September.” “The first September was crisp and golden as an apple. Oh, sweet September, thy first breezes bring the dry leaf’s rustle and the squirrel’s laughter, the cool fresh air whence health and vigor spring, and promise of exceeding joy hereafter!” September is the month of Apples! “Married in September’s golden glow, smooth and serene your life will go” “If the storms of September clear off warm, the storms the following winter will be warm”

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE THIRD JUDICIAL CIRCUIT,
IN AND FOR HAMILTON COUNTY, FLORIDA

Case No.: 2023 DR000087
Division:

RUSSELL LEE HOGSHOOTER,
Petitioner,

and

BELINDA KAY HOGSHOOTER,
Respondent.

SUMMONS:

IMPORTANT

A lawsuit has been filed against you. You have **20 calendar days** after this summons is served on you to file a written response to the attached complaint/petition with the clerk of this circuit court, located at: *(street address)* 207 N.E. FIRST STREET, ROOM 106, JASPER, FL. 32052. A phone call will not protect you. Your written response, including the case number given above and the names of the parties, must be **filed** if you want the Court to hear your side of the case.

If you do not file your written response on time, you may lose the case, and your wages, money, and property may be taken thereafter without further warning from the Court. There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may call an attorney referral service or a legal aid office (listed in the phone book).

If you choose to file a written response yourself, at the same time you file your written response to the Court, you must also serve a copy of your written response on the party serving this summons at:

(Name and address of party serving summons) RUSSELL LEE HOGSHOOTER #AS1825, HAMILTON CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTE, 10650 S.W. 46TH STREET, JASPER, FL. 32052

If the party serving summons has designated email address(es) for service or is represented by an attorney, you may designate email address(es) for service by or on you. Service must be in accordance with Florida Rule of Judicial Administration 2.516.

Copies of all court documents in this case, including orders, are available at the Clerk of the Circuit Court’s office. You may review these documents, upon request.

You must keep the Clerk of the Circuit Court’s office notified of your current address. (You may file Designation of Current Mailing and Email Address, Florida Supreme Court Approved Family Law Form

Florida Family Law Rules of Procedure Form 12.910(a), Summons: Personal Service on an Individual (03/17)

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 for Enrollment documents and a brief FAQ section of the most common questions about UKB membership. Find forms for Membership Applicaitions, 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 or call 918-871-2866.

House Committee Approves $8.4B for Indian Health Service, Including Advance Appropriations for 2027

ELYSE WILD, Native News Online

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- As Indian Country braces for the impact of sweeping federal cuts, the Indian Health Service may receive advanced appropriations next year. The House Appropriations Committee last week passed the Fiscal Year 2026 appropriations bill for Interior, Environment and Related Agencies. Included in the $8.41 billion earmarked for IHS is $6.05 billion in advance appropriations for FY 2027.

The president's budget request, announced in May, included zero advanced appropriations for the IHS. The newly passed bill follows a June Committee hearing during which lawmakers from both sides of the aisle pledged to restore advanced appropriations for the federal agency.

The Committee's total funding for IHS is about $500 million more than the president's budget request of $8.1 billion. Both figures fall short of the $63 billion request made by the National Tribal Budget Formulation Workgroup in 2024.

IHS is tasked with providing health care for 3.6 million Native Americans. The agency has long suffered from lackluster funding, driving high staff vacancy rates, resulting in what many in Indian Country say is inadequate care.

Urban Indian Care

The bill authorizes a notable increase for

Urban Indian Health — $105.99 million, or $15 million more than the FY 2025 enacted amount. Seventy percent of Native peoples in the United States live in urban centers.

Other funding allocations include:

- **Purchased and Referred Care:** $1.05 billion for emergency, hospital, and specialty care services, with particular attention to PRC-dependent areas, including California
- **Dental Health:** $287 million, including $8 million to expand Dental Support Centers to all 12 service areas and $6.5 million for electronic dental records
- **Alcohol and Substance Abuse:** $286 million for treatment programs
- **Infrastructure and Equipment:**Health Care Facilities Construction: $188.7 million, including $14 million specifically for staff housing to help recruit and retain healthcare professionals
- **Sanitation Facilities Construction:** $131 million
- **Emergency Generators:** $8 million for back-up power systems across IHS facilities, tribal health programs, and urban Indian organizations
- **Contract Support Costs:** $1.819 billion (indefinite appropriation)
- **Tribal Leases:** $366 million (indefinite appropriation)
- **Indian Health Professions:** $95.3 million for scholarships, loan repayment, and professional training programs
- **Produce Prescription Pilot:** $7 million to increase access to fresh produce and traditional foods.
- **Alzheimer's Disease Programs:** $6 million for culturally appropriate dementia care
- **Maternal Health:** $3 million for improving maternal health outcomes
- **Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Initiative:** $31 million for criminal investigators and evidence recovery equipment

"A place of peace": Tohi Edasdi Recovery Community Center opens officially

By SCOTT MCKIE B.P., One Feather Asst. Editor

CHEROKEE, N.C. – "This is a dream come true," said Samantha Bradley just prior to cutting the ribbon on a new facility that will provide a friendly face and a caring heart to those in active addiction or those on their recovery journey. She helped open the new Tohi Edasdi Recovery Community Center located in Wayohi (Wolftown) in Cherokee, N.C. on the morning of Tuesday, July 29.

Tohi Edasdi is part of the Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness program which describes itself as "a nonprofit staffed entirely by Certified Peer Support Specialists who draw on their own lived experience of recovery from mental health and/or substance use challenges to support others".

Bradley commented on the staff of the Center, "We're all peer supports. We're all in recovery from something – substances or mental health."

She spoke of her own past with addiction. "When I was into my addiction, here on the (Qualla) Boundary, I was what they call a chronic relapser. I call it a chronic overcomer. But, I kept going back over and over. At the time the Hospital didn't have all the fancy long-term…now we have this beautiful continuum at the Hospital, which is amazing. But, at that time I got sent to Asheville for treatment and that's how I got in contact with Sunrise.

In 2016, I came out of treatment and they were doing this beautiful work. We hire peer supports, we're giving people a chance, we pay them a living wage, and to be able to support people where they're at. My dream has always been…I love Asheville and Asheville has a lot of resources, but I'm not from Asheville. I'm from Cherokee. I'm EBCI (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians) and this is my home and I felt like my people deserved more."

According to Sunrise, peer support specialists can help people find some of the following services: wellness options; MAT (medicated assisted treatment); food, clothing, and hygiene supplies; employment assistance; community navigation; transitional housing; help obtaining an ID; harm reduction services including Naloxone; and education/training.

Sue Polston, Sunrise executive director, stated, "I just wanted to thank everybody for coming out here, and thank the Tribe and everybody that has given us this opportunity to be here. As Samantha said, I supported this 100 percent, but I knew I couldn't do it. I'm not from here. I don't know the culture. But, every one of these folks back here do and I am so privileged to have them on our team and have every one of you all here today. This is a bigger turnout than our Asheville drop-in center."

On the Center, Bradley said, "What it is, in essence, is a place where people can just come and be. They don't have to be here for any reason. They don't have to be sober. They don't have to be in recovery. They don't even have to be on the track to recovery to be just a community member. It's just a place to come. And, in our place specifically, Tohi Edasdi, is a place of peace. We want you to feel like you're at peace when you come here."

She thanked the Wolftown Community Club for their support. "Wolftown Community Club has been super supportive. We're in their community. When we came in, we didn't want to step on anybody's toes so we would just go around and introduce ourselves. Wolftown opened their arms to us and has given us training space when we didn't have it."

Samantha Bradley, center, a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the western regional director at Sunrise Community for Recovery and Wellness, cuts the ribbon to officially open the Tohi Edasdi (A place of peace) Recovery Community Center in Wayohi (Wolftown) in Cherokee, N.C. on the morning of Tuesday, July 29. (SCOTT MCKIE B.P./One Feather photos)

A portion of the interior of the Center

People are shown gathered for Tuesday's ribbon-cutting.

Pat Oocumma, of the Wolftown Community Club, praised the work of Sunrise. "They are those that have found themselves and what I see in them – leaders, peers, warriors, and not sugar-coating anything. No judging."

Bradley further noted, "Our main thing is showing people that we're going to show up for them no matter what. We're going to show up.

The idea is Tohi Edasdi, 'A Place of Peace'. We're right on the river. We're going to keep culture at the forefront…It's free. It's low-barrier and we connect people with what they need."

Everyone is welcome, Bradley stressed. "We hope that we can help someone. I just want to be able to help someone make it to the next day."

The Center will be open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information, call (828) 506-8505.

Bradley spoke to the crowd and said, in part, "We hope that we can help someone. I just want to be able to help someone make it to the next day."

"A Sacred Thread" showcases the Snowbird Community's language, culture, and land back efforts

BROOKLYN BROWN, One Feather Reporter

SNOWBIRD, N.C. – A Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) North Carolina documentary about Cherokee language and cultural revitalization in Tutiyi (Snowbird) titled "A Sacred Thread," premiered on July 31. Filmmaker Brooks Bennett, who has worked closely with Tutiyi community members in the past on other projects, condensed two years of filming into the hour-long documentary.

Executive Producer Heather Burgiss felt that the documentary was critically important to make, "This is a project that we feel very passionately about. It's right up our mission alley, and I've been working with Brooks for three years on this project, Brooks had been working on the Matriarch Mural project and really got to know the people and the place and the stories of the Snowbird Cherokee, and he really developed relationships that led to seeing that there was an underrepresented story here, and that was the mission that really aligned with what we do.

"Snowbird Cherokee is a nuance; in the dialect and trying to keep the language alive for future generations, and not just the language, but the culture and looking back at the land and looking at place names and the heritage. So, we just felt we had a responsibility if we could, to try to help amplify the voices," she said.

Angelina Jumper, the cultural resources supervisor of the Junaluska Museum and a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) from Tutiyi, is one of the main voices of the film.

"It was a really cool experience and I'm a talker, so reflecting on things and talking about them, it just helped me understand more and I think learn more, not just about myself, but how important the work that we were doing was, and that really came out through the film. I was really excited that that was what was captured and what [Brooks] was able to convey for us," Jumper said.

"I feel like it really captured the interconnectivity of what we all do, and it showcased things that I don't think that you can get from just talking to people about the language and the culture. And then you've also got this element of the natural environment that I feel like when we talk about language and culture that gets left out or we just don't think about it."

A major part of the film was Jumper's discovery regarding her family's land, the Wachacha tract of land that was unethically taken by the U.S. Forest Service in the early 20th century and now operates as Rattler Ford Campground.

"That's probably one of my favorite things that developed out of the film is that when I had started work, I had found remnants of Register of Deeds stuff, and I was like, 'What is this? This is my family. This is Wachacha family stuff.' And then I started digging deeper," she said.

"I think T.J. [Holland] had begun that research, and Louise [Reed], when I was working with her before she passed, I had the privilege of being able to talk about it with her, because it was her family, too, and she had known about it… Louise is the woman that taught me seven generations behind me, all the names of the people who existed behind me, and if I hadn't spent that time with her then I wouldn't have that knowledge. We filmed maybe two weeks after I had pulled out all that stuff from the U.S. Forest Service archive, so that was really raw. I'm glad it happened that way, because watching it back I'm like, 'Wow, that did say what needed to be said.'"

Gilliam Jackson, a Cherokee fluent speaker from Tutiyi, also starred in the film and discussed sacred sites including his family's graves that are also now managed by the U.S. Forest Service. "I think the message that I wanted people to understand was the amount of control and the lack of control that we have as Indigenous people on stolen lands. We gather together sometimes with our family, and most of us in our community come from the Wachacha family. My grandmother was a Wachacha, and as I understand it, I think there were 13 or 14 siblings, and most of them are buried in that burial ground. In order for us to just go out and clean and cut weeds and rake, we have to get permission from the Forest Service," he said.

Angelina Jumper, the cultural resources supervisor of the Junaluska Museum and a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) from Tutiyi, is one of the main voices of the film. (Images courtesy of PBS North Carolina)

"I'm truly grateful to the people who were involved in the documentary. I just think that people need to know Snowbird is a very culturally rich community, and by far, we have the greatest percentage of Cherokee speakers per capita. The Trail of Tears started right above where the Ingles Supermarket is now in Robbinsville. We had at one time three mounds, and things that have been written about Cherokees in North Carolina often excludes Snowbird."

Jackson works with second language learners in the Dadiwonisi adult language program, and he highlighted one of the program graduates as making a powerful statement about the importance of Cherokee language and culture. "During her graduation speech, she said 'I have become a Cherokee woman.' She was a Cherokee woman by enrollment and by biological blood, but it was a lot more meaningful when she said, 'I became a Cherokee woman,' meaning I'm learning the culture. I'm learning the language. My blood is different now."

Cassidy Galaviz is the Dadiwonisi program supervisor and a member of the EBCI from Tutiyi. The film also followed Galaviz's journey towards fluency, with the late Cherokee fluent speaker J.C. Wachacha, or "Eduts," being a mentor and supporter for Galaviz. "I really enjoyed this experience. I think just some of my favorite moments was honestly just being in Eduts' garden. I really enjoy my job, I really enjoy all of it, helping bring a community together and working with the students, working with the language," he said.

With Eduts' unexpected passing during filming, Galaviz spoke to the significance of having this footage of Eduts speaking. "It means a lot. I've always been very aware of capturing those things, even as a kid, knowing, understanding how quickly speakers are passing, how fast the language is 'dying out,' all those things. It is greater to me because it's captured in video. To be able to actually see the reactions, because there's a lot of nonverbal communication with the speakers. Whenever they talk, they'll give out hand gestures and things like that, which videos really do capture. We can still see him. We can still hear him. We can still talk to him."

Galaviz is hopeful that the film will encourage more language learning. "Hopefully it does light a fire in people a little bit to want to learn the language more. And honestly, even if not, it's perfectly fine. We're still going to learn, we're still going to keep going. We'll pass it on for anybody who wants to. But for those that do, hopefully they now have resources and things like that to know where to go, to know who to look for. If they see me, they can try to talk to me. Even if they just say 'siyo,' I'm going to say 'siyo' back. If that's all you know, use it. I'll be happy either way."

Filmmaker Brooks Bennett has built strong bonds with the Tutiyi community, who are the subject of the film. In 2017, Bennett was just passing through on a trip with his wife when they stopped at Cherokee woodcarver Billy Welch's shop. "That was my first introduction to Snowbird people, and I bought a little bear from him. He told me kind of the broad stroke story, and I always kept that bear on my desk and I would look at it whenever I was doing a project and think if there's ever an opportunity to collab with PBS on something like that, then that's what I think I was pulled here for."

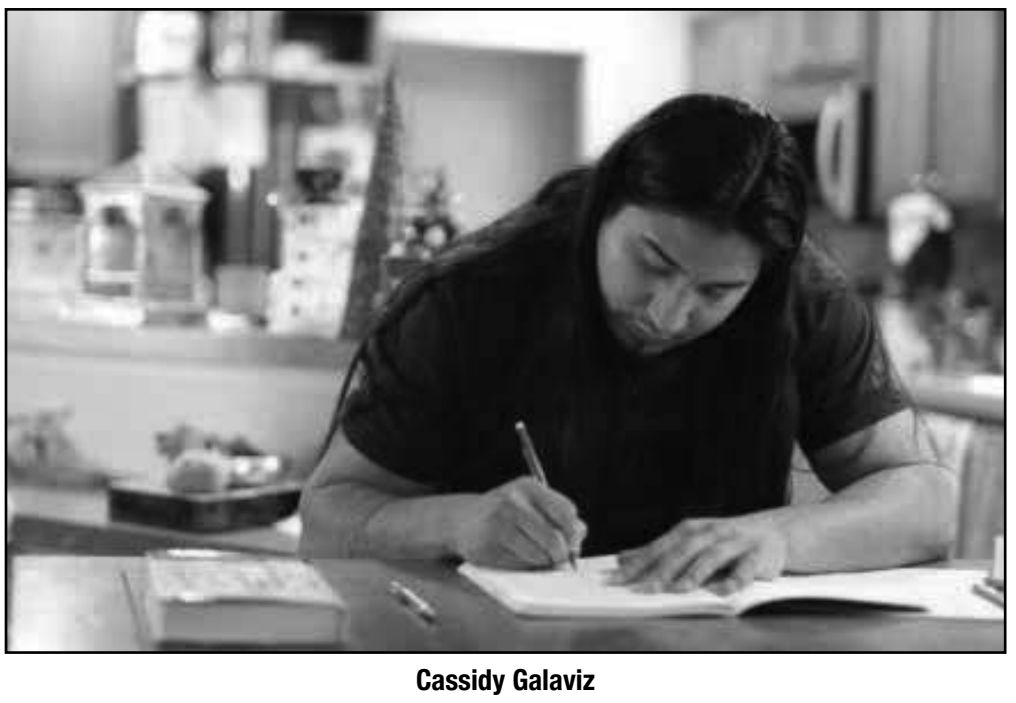
Bennett noticed a 'thread' tying together Cherokee land, culture and people, and that thread is the language.

"There's a metaphysical quality or this spirit behind everything story wise, content wise, whatever I'm experiencing in nature or with Buffalotown or with Billy [Welch] or even the Matriarch Mural project, and that's kind of the title is it's the spirit that runs through everything in the community and it's the spirit that motivates people to research their history and the spark that initiates those crafts. The more Cherokee I learn, the more I understand that these things are better expressed in the language, and we don't have the right vocabulary in English to really convey that meaning or the essence that was developed here."

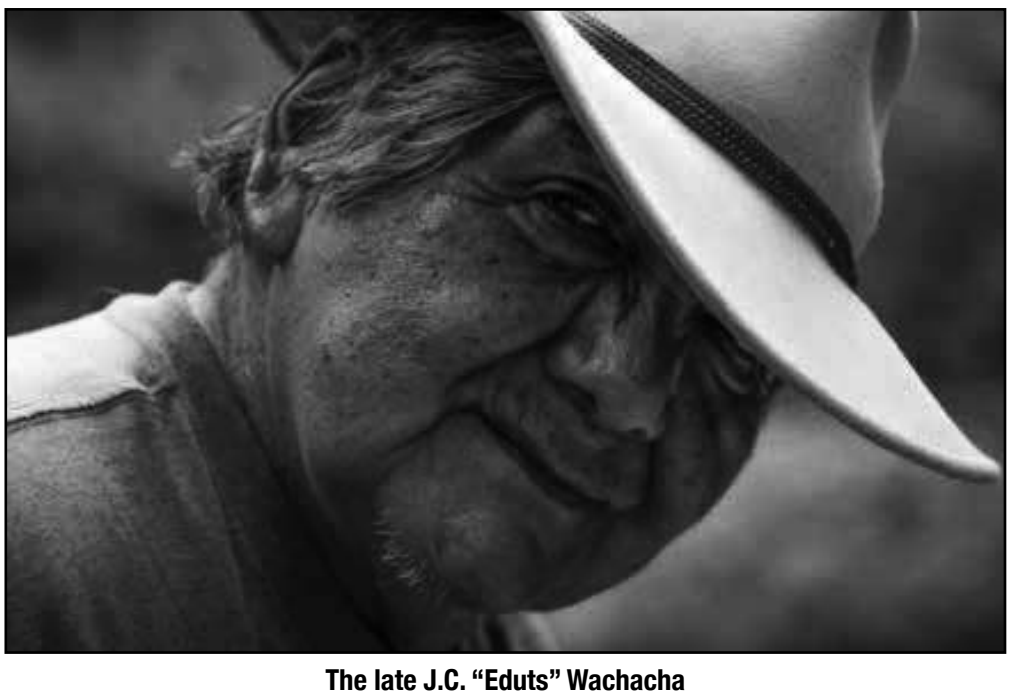
Bennett said filming in Eduts and his brother Mike Wachacha's garden was one of the more spectacular parts of the project. "The history and that connection and to be able to go there and it's not just on paper. I think that's the biggest thing is real world experiences in the places where the language has been spoken forever."

With encouragement from Eduts' wife, Jeanne, Bennett captured parts of Eduts' funeral for the film. "I got the invite to the funeral from Jeanne, and I went to the service at the church in Snowbird without a camera, and I just wanted to be there for this community that I love. So, Jeanne was actually the one who encouraged me. She's like, 'He always wanted to be in front of the camera. He always wanted to tell the story. This is no different and you shouldn't think of it as anything different.' I was very reluctant in that moment because this is my family now, and I didn't know if it was right to bring a camera, but when Jeanne wanted it, I felt like it was kind of my duty to make sure that that was preserved with everything else, and I'm so glad that I did. I stayed very in the background the whole time. You can see how my style of filming was different in every other moment than that.

"It was hard, but it was beautiful. And seeing CLMAP [Cherokee Language Master Apprentice Program] and Dadiwonisi come out and sing, I think it was exactly what he would want. And I think the final line from the film, 'I think that they can still see us and that they're watching over us,' I felt like he was there that whole time.



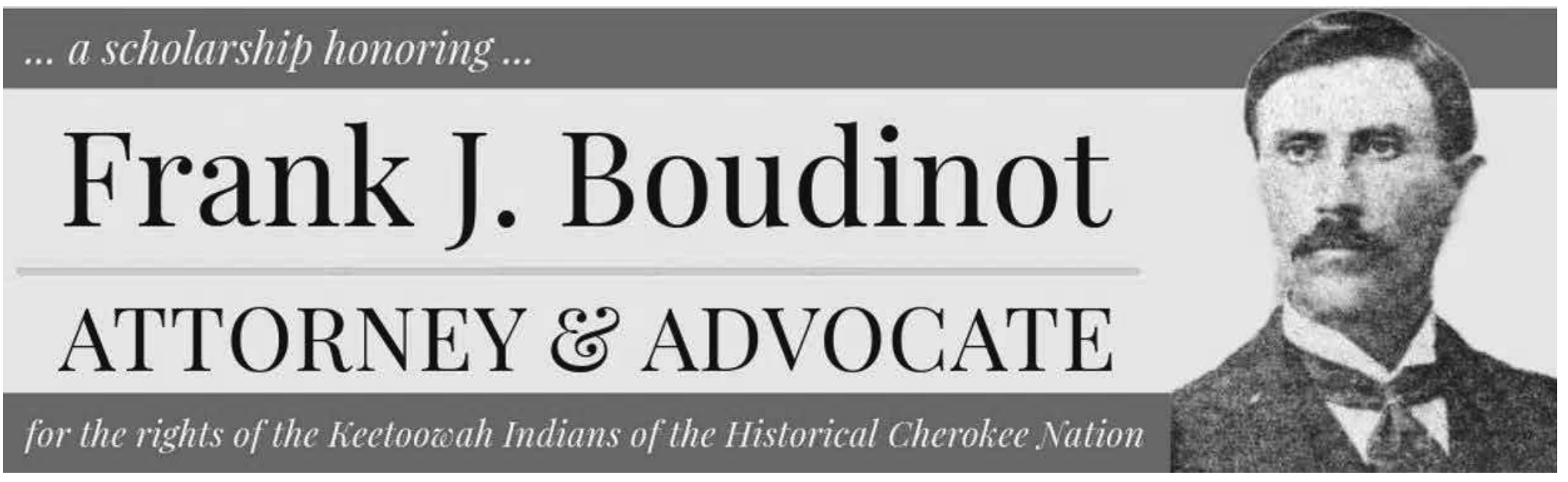
Cassidy Galaviz



The late J.C. "Eduts" Wachacha

Boudinot Scholars Program Awards First Scholarships

"The goal is to encourage our members to go to law school and then come work for our tribe." Victoria Holland



Marilyn Craig, Museum Marketing Coordinator

Two Keetoowah college students have been awarded scholarships from Boudinot Scholars Program for the upcoming fall semester. Both students are exclusive UKB members and have participated in the UKB summer youth employment program for the past two or three years. Micah Vann is attending Cameron University with a double major in psychology and criminal justice, and Teala Wildcat-Johnson, is attending NSU and is majoring in graphic arts.

Boudinot Scholars is a privately funded scholarship program for Keetoowah students exclusively enrolled in the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians who are pursuing law degrees and who are committed to practicing law in a manner which benefits the Keetoowah Tribal Community.

The scholarship is named after Frank J. Boudinot. Frank J. Boudinot, AW0ᏉᎾ (kolanv or raven) was born in Indian Territory, OK, August 20, 1866, and grew up on his family's allotment in Ft. Gibson, IT. He began his college career at Bacone in Tahlequah and completed his Juris Doctorate degree at the University of Michigan College of Law. Upon completion of his law degree, he served as legal counsel to several Indian tribes in Oklahoma, including the Keetoowahs, Delawares, Shawnees, Seminoles, and Cherokees.

The focus of his legal work was helping tribes to preserve, to gain compensation, or to minimize the loss of land throughout the Allotment Period (1889-1906). Later, he helped organize the Keetoowah Government during the Reorganization Period (1934-1950). With the Eastern Band, Boudinot helped to win a $5,000,000 settlement in the US Court of Claims. Boudinot was passionate about helping his people. He worked tirelessly until his death in 1945 to establish federal recognition for the United Keetoowah Band.

August 10, 1946, almost one year after Boudinot's death, federal Congressional recognition was awarded to the Keetoowahs, due in great degree to the expertise and tenacious efforts of Frank J. Boudinot.

Fast forward to 2025, and another pair of Keetoowah tribal members who became lawyers, Bryan Shade and Victoria Holland came together to initiate this scholarship. "Basically, this was Bryan's idea, he reached out to me about it, and I was all in," declared Holland.

"The goal is to encourage our members to go to law school and then come work for our tribe. We face many legal battles as a tribe, and no one is going to be more of an advocate for our tribe than our tribal members. This inaugural year we had no applicants specifically for the legal field, but we still wanted to encourage our tribal members to further their education. We became aware of two young ladies who are exclusive UKB were in the Summer Youth Program, and we wanted to honor them by gifting them some scholarship money," she said.

"We are hopeful that in the future we will have applicants that want to further their education in the legal field and assist in moving our tribe forward," concluded Holland.

Happenings at the John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum

Sew and Sew

The final series of classes in Getting Back to Basics will be Sewing. With previous classes, participants learned about hand stitching and quilting. This series will focus on machine sewing. Participants will learn how to operate the machine, make different stitches, and will be making an apron as a class project.

Keetoowah Tradition Keeper Betty Holcomb will be teaching the sewing classes. Betty teaches a lot of traditional classes, including preserving and canning food and making Kanuchi balls, but she says sewing is her favorite thing to do. This series of classes will be held September 20, October 18 and November 15. The cost of the series is $75. For more information, contact Barbara Girty Foster at 918-871-2794.

Keetoowah Museum Celebration Activities

The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum will host a Quilt Show, and a Bogo Earring sale - buy one, get the second one at half price on October 4. Celebration Shirts will only be sold at the Keetoowah Museum on Saturday, October 4, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm.

Quilt Raffle - Some lucky person will win a quilt during the 75th Annual Keetoowah Celebration. As part of the show promotion, museum staff will sell chances on a beautiful pink and green floral star quilt. The chances are $3 for one ticket, $5 for two tickets, or $10 for five tickets.

The Keetoowah Museum gift shop will begin selling the tickets on August 4 and sales will end at 3 pm on Celebration Day. The quilt will be raffled off at 4 pm on October 4 and you do not have to be to be present to win. For more information, contact Kyndal at 918-871-2763.

For more information about these events and activities, call us at 918-871-2866 or send a message through Facebook at John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum.

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

TAKE ACTION NOW!

Defend UKB Rights!

PROTECT OUR RIGHTS, LAND AND FUTURE

A secret provision drafted by Senator Markwayne Mullin, coordinated by the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma (CNO), **threatens to strip the UKB of trust land rights and future economic development opportunities.** This is a direct attack on our sovereignty, our identity, and our treaty-protected relationship with the United States.

UKB Affirmation of Rights is clear:

- **Congress' Confirmation of Rights:** Keetoowah Status Act – 1946.
- **Courts Confirmation of Rights:** The U.S. Court of Appeals upheld UKB trust land rights. The Supreme Court left that decision intact. *Cherokee Nation v. Bernhardt, 946 F.3d 1222 (10th Cir. 2019), cert denied.*
- **Executive Branch Confirmation of Rights:** In 2025, the Department of the Interior reaffirmed that the UKB and the CNO share equal rights over the Oklahoma Cherokee Reservation.

SEND CONGRESS A MESSAGE NOW!

*Raise **your voice** and protect our treaty rights.*

It only takes a minute. Scan the QR code or visit **ukb-nsn.gov/DefendUKBRights** to demand your representatives defend UKB rights.

UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND *of* CHEROKEE INDIANS *in* OKLAHOMA

UKB-NSN.GOV/DEFENDUKBRIGHTS

Center for Native Health to unveil community kiln in the fall

BROOKLYN BROWN, One Feather Reporter

CHEROKEE, N.C. – The Center for Native Health (CNH), in collaboration with the Ray Kinsland Leadership Institute and with support from South Arts, Cherokee Preservation Foundation, and East Fork Pottery, is in the home stretch of a community kiln build in Tsisqwohi (Birdtown).

Trey Adcock, executive director of CNH, said the idea of for the kiln came from two award-winning potters from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), Tara McCoy and Levi West, "This project is driven by Tara and Levi's vision and dream, and we are blessed to be part of helping that come to fruition," he said.

Louise Deroualle, a lecturer of art from the University of North Carolina at Asheville (UNCA), along with Matt West, a former lecturer and studio tech from UNCA, worked closely with McCoy and West on the kiln build.

"We had quite a diverse group for our size. Several tribal members, two non-members, one from another hemisphere. I probably asked Levi and others too many questions but undeniably learned so much about Cherokee – the region and the people – past and present," West said.

Deroualle added, "Levi and Kilyne [Oocumma] have been great in just educating and telling a little bit of the story how did clay happen and the mud daubers, and the relationship with nature, too. A cool moment the day we were starting the kiln, Trey was there as well, and Levi did a prayer to the beginning of the kiln, and we had a hawk that just flew over us. So, that was super special because then Levi explained what the hawk means."

"I am from a different culture, too, so I bring my Brazilian point of view and my stories, and we are all sharing our different ways of doing. But at the same time, I have so many commonalities as well, like clay. Clay is a good way to create and shape and build. We build things, but we also build community. It's been very special and I'm very happy that I got to join it," Deroualle said.

Bonnie Claxton, CNH deputy director, spoke to the health and wellness aspect of the kiln. "One of the exciting things about this project is that each firing will be a community event. With a big wood kiln like this, you need lots of work to fill it up, lots of wood split, and lots of people to feed wood to the kiln consistently for 6-12 hours. At The Center for Native Health, we know that culture is health, and being in community is health. So, every time this kiln is fired will be a physical act of individual and community health for everyone involved, an example of healing through culture that makes our Native communities so resilient."

The group is anticipating the first community firing of the kiln in early fall, with a celebratory community event accompanying the fire. The One Feather will provide an update with the details for the event.

Levi West, Bonnie Claxton, and Matt West pose with the Center for Native Health community kiln build in Tsisqwohi (Birdtown).
(Photo by Kilyne Oocumma, CNH Digital Media Storyteller)

Levi West, Louise Deroualle, and Matt West work on the community kiln.
(Photo by Kilyne Oocumma, CNH Digital Media Storyteller)

75TH UKB CELEBRATION

PRE-CELEBRATION

Miss/Jr. Miss UKB Pageant
Sept. 27, 2025
6 P.M.
THE VENUE

Golf Tournament
OCT. 2-3, 2025
8AM-5PM
PRYOR CREEK GOLF COURSE

Dignitary Dinner
OCT. 2, 2025
6PM
BY INVITATION ONLY

Open Mic Gospel Sing
OCT. 3, 2025
7PM
CELEBRATION PAVILION

Chili Supper/Stomp Dance
OCT. 3, 2025
7PM/9PM
STOMP GROUNDS

SATURDAY, OCT 4

CELEBRATION GROUNDS

MOVIE SCREENING-ALL DAY
ALLOTMENT PRESENTATION-10AM & 2PM

8 A.M.
CAR SHOW
KIDS FISHING DERBY

9 A.M.
STICKBALL TOURNAMENT

10 A.M.
TURTLE RACES
CORNSTALK SHOOT
VOLLEYBALL
MARBLES
ARTS & CRAFTS VENDORS
CDC KIDS ACTIVITIES
CHUNKY
HORSESHOES
BLOWGUN
WILLS CLINIC (10-2)
QUILT SHOW (10-2)

11 A.M.
CHIEF'S ADDRESS
CROWNING OF UKB
AMBASSADORS
GOSPEL SINGING

12 P.M.
TRADITIONAL MEAL

1 P.M.
CORNHOLE TOURNAMENT

2 P.M.
BINGO

UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND
DhYSGy DhBOᏏ

FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL
LGODWIN@UKB-NSN.GOV

FOOD & CRAFT VENDORS