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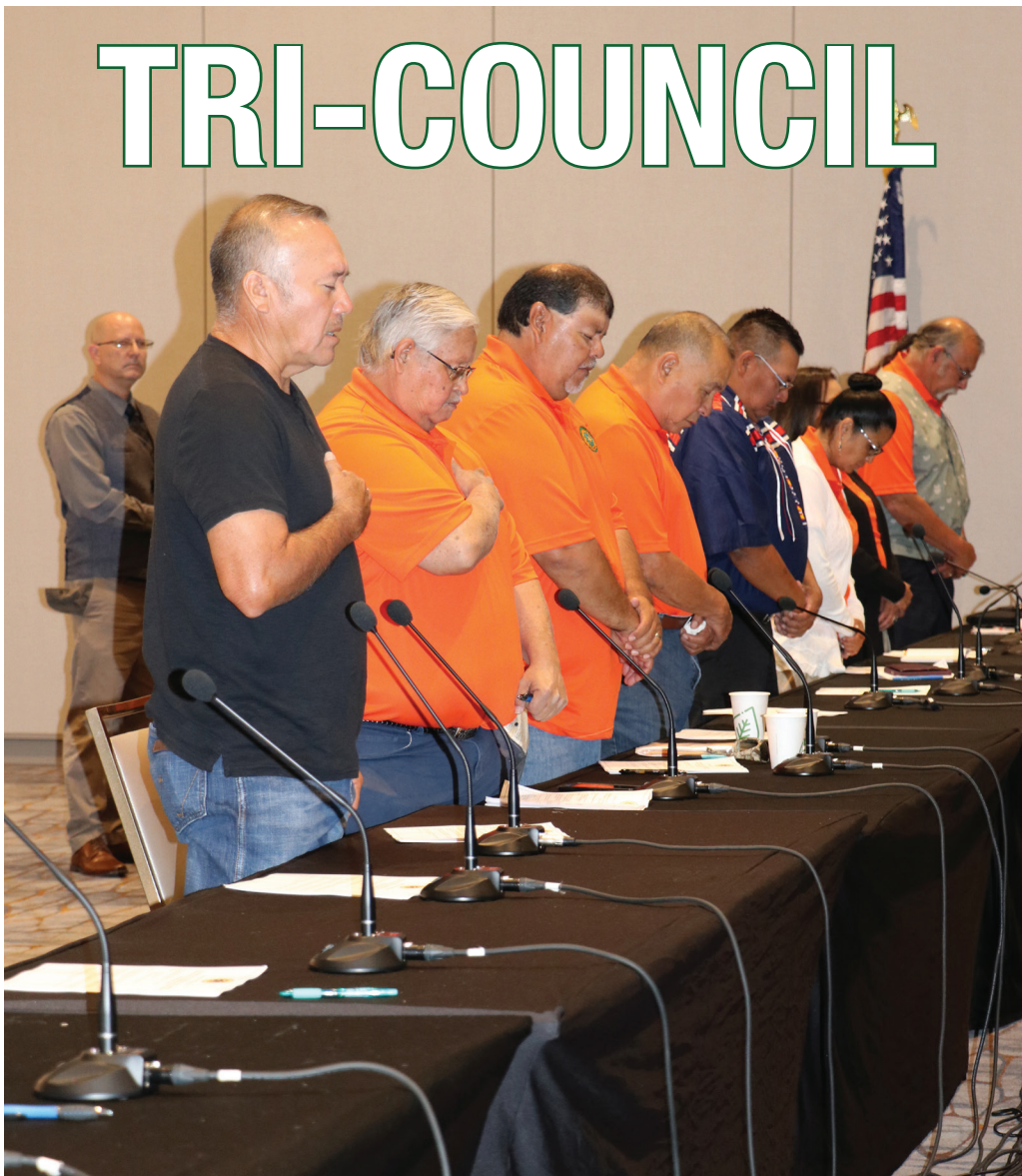


FROSH PHENOM
UKB citizen Reagan Longbird Smith is making a name at Carl Albert State.
ANI GIDUWAGI, 7

GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

YSG GWY AŴP Official News Publication of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma July 2023

TRI-COUNCIL



United Keetoowah Band Sequoyah Dist. Rep. Junior Catron, left, opens a Tri-Council meeting with a prayer in Cherokee, North Carolina. The Tri-Council consists of the UKB, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Cherokee Nation. PHOTOS BY LANI HANSEN/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

EBCI hosts annual meeting of the 3 Cherokee tribes

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians hosts the UKB and Cherokee Nation in the homelands of Cherokee, North Carolina.

BY LANI HANSEN
Senior Reporter

CHEROKEE, N.C. – In continuation of the theme “Completing the Circle of Fire,” the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians (UKB), Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) and Cherokee Nation (CN) met for Tri-Council to discuss topics regarding the Cherokee people.

Tri-Council has brought together the three Cherokee tribes since 2012. This year the meeting was hosted by EBCI at Harrah’s Cherokee Convention Center in Cherokee, North Carolina.

Three days in June, the tribes took part in different activities together. There was the annual Tri-Council golf tournament held at the Sequoyah National Golf Club. Those who did not golf had the options of horseback riding, ATV rides and fishing. Tours of the Cherokee Indian Hospital and the Medical Cannabis Farm were also available. Ladies from the UKB, EBCI and CN met on how to make ribbon skirts.

On the second day, the three tribes had met for the Tri-Council pre-meeting in the Cherokee Convention Center. In the pre-meeting the tribes discussed topics placed on the agenda, where CN Council made a comment of renaming Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma to Cherokee Nation in the resolution summary.

UKB Chief Joe Bunch stated, “The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma does not represent all Cherokee’s to be called The Cherokee Nation, therefore it would mean changing the history.”

After a long discussion the decision

was made to uphold the change, and the meeting moved forward. The resolution UKB submitted of having the UKB delegate to serve in the US House of Representatives was discussed and did not pass during the pre-meeting. After two more resolutions were added to the agenda by EBCI the pre-meeting was dismissed.

The tribes also took part in a gift exchange and watched stickball as part of the last activities.

When the tribes had met for the Tri-Council meeting sovereignty, identity and culture were just a few topics discussed in the four resolutions on the agenda. The resolutions approved ranged from a land exchange proposal, Indian Arts and Crafts Act, National Congress of American Indians membership policies and re-naming an Army base.

Res. No. 1, which was submitted by the EBCI solidifies opposition from the Tri-Council to a land exchange proposal that would authorize a copper mining project at the Apache site Chi’chil Bildagoteel (known as Oak Flat) located in the Tonto National Forest.

According to the resolution, this site has played an essential role in Apache religion, traditions, and culture for centuries and is a sacred area and traditional cultural property with deep tribal religious, cultural, archaeological, historical, and environmental significance.

Res. No. 1 had called for Congress to enact H.R. 1351, the Save Oak Flat From

SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 3

Councils from United Keetoowah Band, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and Cherokee Nation gather for a group photo after the 2023 Tri-Council meeting in late June in Cherokee, North Carolina



UKB responds on law enforcement jurisdiction issue

BY LANI HANSEN
Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH – It has been brought to attention at the United Keetoowah Band that the UKB Lighthouse Policemen have been lacking the civil and criminal law enforcement jurisdiction.

The Adair County Sheriff Jason Ritchie released a statement saying, “as you know, there has been some discrepancy about the jurisdiction of the Lighthouse police in Indian country,” his statement continued, “Research done by myself and information provided by Cherokee Nation, leads me to believe that you do not have jurisdiction within Adair County.”

UKB was quick to respond with a statement from the attorney’s office, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma (“UKB”) is aware of recent unsubstantiated statements by the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma (“CNO”) that the UKB and its Law Enforcement Officers lack civil or criminal law enforcement jurisdiction. These statements threaten the public safety and welfare of the Oklahoma Cherokee Reservation. One tactic the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma (“CNO”) has used to threaten the public safety is its unfounded letters to multiple county sheriffs on the Oklahoma Cherokee Reservation.

SEE LAW, PAGE 3



UKB Lighthouse Police serves the tribe, its properties and its communities across 14 counties. LANI HANSEN/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS



UKB Housing Director Roxana Wilden presents Sandra Scrapper keys to her new home. LANI HANSEN/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

UKB Housing replaces Scrapper’s childhood home

BY LANI HANSEN
Senior Reporter

LYONS SWITCH – The United Keetoowah Band Housing Department helped change the living situation for one tribal member after asking for assistance of a simple water leak.

“She had called in for a water leak, and the plumber we sent out said it was bad,” Housing Assistant Director Richard Vann said. “We had gone to look at it, the rehab for the house was not worth it so we placed her on our elders list as an emergency. It was during the wintertime too; she didn’t have heat or insulation.”

As Sandra Scrapper was living in her childhood home, which was built in 1907, she came to the tribe looking for a rehab on her home but learned it was needing more work. Vann and Housing Director Roxana Wilden said the house was not up to code.

“She had no heat but was using a wood stove,” Vann said. “Her pipes were freezing, so she was a good candidate for a new house.”

As the Housing Department continued finding more projects in her home that needed fixed such as the plumbing and flooring, they stopped the rehab and suggested giving Scrapper a replacement home.

It was about two years ago when Scrapper was placed on the elders list for her replacement home. From the time her home was demolished to receiving her new home, she patiently waited three months.

“I was excited and overwhelmed, I hardly slept the night before because I knew the next day I could go home,” Scrapper said.

Scrapper’s new replacement home sits on the original land where her older home was on. It is a one-bedroom house provided with central heat and air, dishwasher, refrigerator and a handicapped accessible bathroom. A

SEE HOME, PAGE 3



Assistant Chief
Jeff Wacoche
jwacoche@
ukb-nsn.gov



Secretary
Joyce
Fourkiller
jfourkiller@
ukb-nsn.gov



Treasurer
Sonja Gourd
sgourd@
ukb-nsn.gov



Canadian Dist.
Eddie Sacks
918-822-1957



Cooweescoowee
Dist.
Clifford
Wofford
918-822-1953



Delaware Dist.
Elmer Panther
918-226-1668



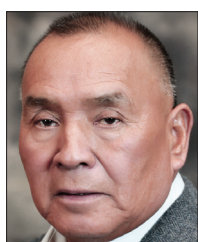
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Frankie Still
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Goingsnake Dist.
Willie Christie
918-822-3803



Illinois Dist.
Peggy Girty
918-457-7067



Saline Dist.
Charles Smoke
918-457-7071



Sequoyah Dist.
Junior Catron
918-315-0970



Tahlequah Dist.
Alvin Hicks
918-931-1462

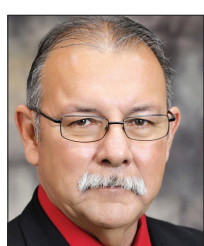
NCAI, ICWA case and Tri-Council

Si yo, ni ga da
June, a somewhat wet month, with severe weather happening all around us, has come and gone. The girls and boys of summer are winding down their respective seasons of little league softball and baseball. But even with summer beginning to slow down, things are still progressing here at the tribe.

I attended the National Congress of American Indian where the agenda was filled with a lot happening in Indian Country. One of the major activities was the federal budget, with deadline looming and the possibilities of budget cuts. Thankfully, Congress averted a shut down, loss of programs and loss of pay for federal employees.

Another issue, which was settled, was the Haaland vs. Brackeen ICWA case being heard by the Supreme Court. Advocates for ICWA included tribes from all over the country signing on to advocate for the Indian Child Welfare Act case.

In this case, the birth mother, adoptive parents and the state of Texas fought to derail 200 years of Indian Sovereignty by filing a challenge against the ICWA as unconstitutional. The challengers claimed the law exceeds federal



Chief's Corner

JOE BUNCH
Principal Chief
jbunch@ukb-nsn.gov

authority, infringes state sovereignty and discriminates based on race. On June 14, 2023, The Supreme Court ruled 7-2 in favor of ICWA.

We support the Federal Recognition process. Last year at the Tri-Council meeting, we three Keetoowah Tribes signed a resolution supporting the Federal Recognition process, anyone who is recognized as a Federally Recognized Tribe, we will welcome and support. NCAI recognizes State Recognized Tribes for membership and as equals, with full voting benefits as a Federal Recognized Tribe and support from the NCAI.

There is a suggestion that until a state recognized tribe is federally recognized they be treated as an Associate Member with Associate member benefits (non-voting). I am sure there will be more discussion over this in November at

the year-end meeting in New Orleans, which will also mark the NCAI 80th year supporting Indian Country on an array of Indian Rights and sovereignty issues.

I attended both the Kituwah Mounds celebration and Tri-Council meeting hosted by the Eastern Band of Cherokees. The Kituwah Mound was great to share in recognition of the historic way of life in mound development. For me, it was like coming home. In the words of the Eastern Band, I di gi du wa gi, we are all Keetoowah.

During the Tri-Council meeting we were happy to announce Torrie Holland as our delegate to Congress, and Kim Teehee as the CNO delegate, and EBCI is currently picking their delegate.

Our resolution supported the three Cherokee tribes each having a representative to the House, however it was met with opposition from CNO and was killed during the discussion and planning session.

In closing, come by or call if you have a question, my phone number is 918-772-0666. Pray for our officers, district representatives and our Keetoowah Tribe, bless the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians.

Wa do, do da go hv i.

Individuality within our community

Individually, we all experience life in a unique way which is understood by our singular perspective. Even though we all experience life differently, every one of us understands human emotions, feelings, and thoughts. While these human conditions are all unique to the individual, we must remember these responses are also part of the total human condition.

While there are times we might feel alone, sad, and stricken with grief, it is important we do not forget that each one of us can experience those same feelings at any time. This is why it is important to keep in mind many of us are going through struggles other individuals may know nothing about.

When we remember our struggles, and how they made us feel, we can then relate and empathize with someone who appears to be struggling with their own responses.

The month of July is filled with anticipation for many individuals. There are fireworks, cookouts, lakes and rivers to swim, and hopefully warm family gatherings for people to enjoy. July is a commemoration of United States independence, and for many people, a reason to celebrate unity and



Echota Behavioral Health

camaraderie.

While happiness and excitement are filling the air in the form of colorful explosions and the smell of late-night campfires, the month of July also highlights some of our less heard issues plaguing our marginalized communities.

July is not only about sticky fingers from marshmallows, but July also highlights the significance of mental health for individuals and communities who might struggle with the impacts of mental wellness.

Many communities which are categorized as a minority can at times struggle with the stigma attached to mental health wellness. Public perception indicates seeking help means something is wrong with an individual. At Echota Behavioral Health, we do not believe something is wrong with individuals, we believe individuals deserve the right to be seen, heard, and valued.

Helping combat the negative stigma that can be attached to mental wellness is therapist Matthew Gibbons.

Regarding mental wellness, Matthew says, "There are different stages of the healing process. Each of us is dealing with stressful situations and circumstances in our lives, and I want to help create an environment that enables individuals to become the healthiest versions of themselves."

"For me," states Gibbons, "Echota feels more like a family environment. The pace is healthier, and the workload is healthier. Echota emphasizes community. Individuals coming through our doors are meant to feel like part of a family, not part of a clinic. The clients are the most important part of the Echota family."

Certainly, we will all experience challenges in life which questions our mental, spiritual, and physical, toughness. At Echota Behavioral Health, we recognize every individual from every community in hopes of helping restore the preciousness that is meant to accompany life.

July is meant to celebrate our collective mindfulness of one another past and present. Let us remember our individual presence as it belongs to our community.

ICWA UPHHELD

UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND
DHSYGY DHBQW

INDIAN CHILD WELFARE

GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

Giduwa Cherokee News
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Tahlequah, OK 74465

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MANAGING EDITOR
Rita Courtwright

SENIOR REPORTER
Lani Hansen

LAYOUT AND DESIGN
Travis Snell

MARKETING SPECIALIST
Shayley Fourkiller

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SCOTUS upholds federal ICWA by 7-2 vote

BY LIONEL RAMOS
Oklahoma Watch

WASHINGTON - In a 7-2 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court on June 15 affirmed the constitutionality of a federal law meant to keep Indian children with their families and tribes.

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 was passed in response to federal policy allowing Indian children to be removed from their homes by state social service workers and put up for adoption by white families or sent to religious boarding schools, where they lost connection to their cultures and identities.

The majority opinion in *Brackeen v. Haaland*, written by Associate Justice Amy Coney Barrett, rejected arguments by Texas and individual plaintiffs that the act discriminates against white families based on race and allows Congress to overstep its authority by directing states to carry out federal law.

"The issues are complicated," Barrett wrote, "but the bottom line is, we reject all the petitioners' challenges to the statute, some on the merits and others for lack of standing."

Barrett explained that Article I of the Constitution, specifically the Indian Commerce Clause, grants Congress the exclusive power to regulate tribal affairs, and that the plaintiff's claim that they were discriminated against for being white wasn't strong enough because they



Members of the American Indian Movement rallied on Nov. 9, 2022 on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. during oral arguments for *Brackeen v. Haaland*. DARREN THOMPSON/NATIVE NEWS ONLINE

already successfully adopted an Indian child.

Associate justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh wrote concurrent opinions. Gorsuch wrote that the court's decision ensures tribal members can raise their children without interference from states or third parties. Kavanaugh wrote that the court's majority opinion leaves the equal protection question — that which asks if the ICWA discriminates based on race — unanswered for lack of

standing. Kavanaugh wrote the claim can still be argued in lower courts.

"In my view, the equal protection issue is serious," Kavanaugh wrote. "Courts, including ultimately this Court, will be able to address the equal protection issue when it is properly raised by a plaintiff with standing—for example, by a prospective foster or adoptive parent or child in a case arising out of a state court foster care or adoption proceeding." Two justices, Clarence Thomas and

Samuel Alito, wrote the dissenting opinions, which argue the majority decision ignores that family law is the purview of the states, and upholding the ICWA directs state courts to place Indian children with Indian caretakers even if it's not in the best interest of the child.

Federal Indian Law experts called the decision a major victory for tribal nations.

Mike McBride III, an Indian law attorney in Tulsa with the Crowe and Dunlevy law firm, said he was pleased the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the ICWA based on of the Constitution's Indian Commerce Clause, which grants a broad authority to Congress to legislate matters relating to tribal nations and individuals.

He pointed to cases cited in the opinion such as *Cotton Petroleum Corp v. New Mexico* and *United States v. Holliday*, which together say Congress can legislate tribal affairs beyond commerce as they apply to nations and individuals, as foundational decisions by the Court that ensure Congress was acting within its powers when it passed the ICWA in the seventies.

"It's a resounding victory for tribes and for native families" said Kathryn Fort, who directs the Federal Indian Law Clinic at Michigan State University and is a frequent contributor to the blog *Turtle Talk*, which discusses tribal legal issues.

Fort said that as of right now, implementing ICWA is business as usual.

COUNCIL: The tribes urge the U.S. to narrow Indian arts laws.

FROM PAGE 1

Foreign Mining Act, as well as repeal Section 3003 which is a "legislative rider to the FY15 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) which was enacted into law in December of 2014...under 3003, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) must begin implementation of the Land Exchange, which includes preparing an environmental impact statement for the Land Exchange and conducting government-to-government consultation with impacted Indian tribes".

In conclusion of this resolution, the Tri-Council of the three federally recognized Cherokee Tribes urged the Administration to make all appropriate and necessary efforts to stop

implementation of Section 3003 and ensure full transparency and information sharing to the general public of the outcomes and status of the ongoing environmental analysis and studies of impacts on tribal religion and culture prior to issuing a final environmental impact statement.

Res. No. 2 was submitted by EBCI and CN asking for Congress to amend the Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA).

The current definitions of 'Indian' and 'Indian Tribe' within the Indian Arts and Crafts Act allow members of state-recognized groups to produce and sell arts and crafts associated with tribes and culture.

The resolution stated, the three federally recognized Cherokee tribal governments hereby urge Congress to

take action to narrow the Indian Arts and Crafts Act's definitions of 'Indian' and 'Indian Tribe' to ensure that only works made by members of federally recognized tribes may be called 'Indian' arts and crafts."

Res. No. 3 was submitted by EBCI and called for amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) regarding its membership policies.

The NCAI currently allows state-recognized groups to join as full voting members. The resolution encouraged NCAI "to allow for inclusion of 'organizations and groups recognized by states as tribes' as non-voting members of NCAI".

Res. No. 4 was submitted by EBCI and called for Congress to re-name Fort

Jackson, a U.S. Army base located in Columbia, S.C. and named for President Andrew Jackson who, as the resolution states, "pressed the Congress to enact the Indian Removal Act that led to forcible removal of Cherokees from our homelands".

The legislation stated that Tri-Council calls on the Department of Defense to do a naming review of Fort Jackson Army Base considering Andrew Jackson's racist treatment of Cherokees and other Native tribes.

Each resolution brought to the Tri-Council meeting will go into action. The meeting is available to watch on the EBCI Communications Department Facebook page.

The Tri-Council 2024 will be hosted by the Cherokee Nation.

LAW: The BIA has issued the UKB's Lighthorse credentials over the tribe's Indian lands.

FROM PAGE 1

The UKB announced that on May 10 the Bureau of Indian Affairs issued Special Law Enforcement Commission credentials to UKB Lighthorse Law Enforcement in recognition of the UKB's civil and criminal jurisdiction over UKB Indian Country and their ability to assist federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies in the enforcement or carrying out of the laws or regulations the agency enforces or administers.

The simple fact is that the UKB Lighthorse possesses law enforcement jurisdiction recognized by the United States Government. Any statement to the contrary is false. We call on federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to move forward with the UKB in the spirit of cooperation as we continue to protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche said,

"Everyone needs to pay attention to this, it's not tribe-on-tribe. We have jurisdiction to provide public safety but Cherokee Nation is saying we don't. Right now, Cherokee Nation have the clout with the sheriff's and police chiefs, who are listening to them and abiding by what they are stating."

UKB Lighthorse Director Charlie Dreadfulwater agreed with Wacoche's statement. Dreadfulwater stated, "We are still going to exercise criminal jurisdiction in the 14 counties. The counties, state and Cherokee Nation are not able to tell us what we cannot do, that comes from a higher authority. We are just trying to help serve the people."

A video statement regarding UKB Law Enforcement made by Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche can be found on the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma Facebook page.

For information about UKB Lighthorse, call 918-871-2811.

HOME: Replacement homes are available through housing and only to eligible elders.

FROM PAGE 1

hookup for the washer/dryer is available but not included with the house.

"It was a blessing seeing my new home," Scaper said as she reflected on her last living situation. "It made me think back of when the old house was there and how it will be different."

The replacement home program is through housing and only available to eligible elders. Most of the homes built are one or two-bedroom depending on if the elder has a caretaker.

To qualify for the program the elder must own the property and have no mortgage or deed restrictions.

When the Housing Department handed Scaper the keys to her new home, Vann stated he was excited because he had been with her every step of the way.

"There were many days I went to visit her at our elder apartments in the Goingsnake District to update her on the process," Vann said. "After I told her that her house was completed, you could see her spirit raise up on her face."

Scaper was so thankful to receive assistance from the Housing Department as she never used the services before then.

She added, "I wanted to thank everyone, it made me want to cry. Frankie Still was behind me all the way, reminding me not to give up."

The UKB Housing Department are always working on different projects and provide homes for tribal elders. They continue to accept volunteer workers to help build homes.

For information about the Housing Department services, call 918-871-2773.



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ukboptin@gmail.com



OBITUARIES

Sue Lynn Bird

Sue Lynn Bird, age 58, day care

teacher, a resident of Tahlequah, OK; passed away, June 4, 2023. According to her Green Country

Funeral Home Tribute page, she was born Dec. 14, 1964. The page also states her funeral service was June 9 at Edify Church in Watts, Oklahoma, with burial at Thompson Cemetery in Chewey, Oklahoma. To send flowers or a memorial gift

to the family of Sue Lynn Bird, visit the Sympathy story at tahlequahfuneral.com.

To share a memory or send condolences to the family, visit the Tribute Wall at tahlequahfuneral.com.

Fonda Renee Davis

Fonda Renee Davis, age 55, of Kenwood, OK. She was born in Claremore, OK on November 10, 1967 to Earl and LeeAnn Davis. Fonda went home to be with her Lord and Savior on Sunday, May 21, 2023 in Pryor, OK.

She is preceded in death by her parents Earl and LeeAnn Davis and daughter Kayla Leanne Davis.

Fonda is survived by her boyfriend Darrell Rock of 15 years of the home; her brothers Anthony "Puddin" and his wife Christy of Kenwood, OK and Randall Davis and Talia Tehee of Kenwood, OK; daughters Kirstie Davidson and her husband Allen "Boo"



of Kenwood, OK and Delaney Gonzales and husband Zack of Salina, OK; Stepsons Darren Rock and wife Ashley from Henryetta, OK, Shane Rock and girlfriend Amber from Okmulgee, OK; grandkids, Damon, James, Karson, Maddie, Lexi, Kael, Cynthia, Rhylee, Joslyn and Niko; many nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family & friends.

Fonda graduated from Salina High School in 1986. In 2001 she pursued her career in Phlebotomy and worked with Sam Hider Clinic and Claremore Indian

Hospital. In her younger years, Fonda played softball and loved to watch her family members play sports in school and during the summertime.

In the summertime she enjoyed being at the creek and looking for crawdads and spending time with family and going to play bingo and casinos.

She loved her Mountain Dew and Marlboro 100's. Fonda especially loved being on the water floating down the creek or river. She also enjoyed yard sales and hording it all so that one day she would have her own yard sale!

She loved to joke around and make people laugh. Her smile would light up the room.

Over all her grandchildren had

her heart and soul and she enjoyed spending as much time as possible with her beautiful grandchildren. Fonda is going to be dearly missed by all who knew her.

Fonda's Wake Service will be held on Tuesday, May 30, 2023 at 6:00pm followed by her family visitation to greet friends until 8:00pm at Lawson's Funeral Homes & Cremation Services, 311 W. Gray St. Jay, OK 74346. Fonda's Celebration of Life Funeral Service will be held on Wednesday, 2:00pm, May 31, 2023 at Kansas High School Dome, Kansas, OK., with Pastor Richard Budder officiating. Followed by her funeral procession to Cloud Creek Cemetery, Colcord, OK

Jacqueline Deerinwater

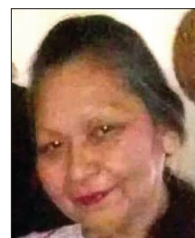
Jacqueline Deerinwater was born on July 12th, 1953 in Lawton, OK, the daughter of Jack R. Gourd and Verna Tsotigh. She grew up with one sister, Valerie. Jacqueline was so very proud of her Cherokee-Kiowa heritage and loved everything about her culture. She loved attending POW WOW and never missed the chance to reconnect with her roots. Her family is what made her happy, she was the proud mother of two sons and

two daughters, Ricky, Solen, Shena, and Cody. Later this love went on to her grandchildren, AJ, Roman and Aubriana. She loved her family unconditionally, and always made time for them. She had a wonderful smile and always made you feel at home around her. For all the plans she had for the future, she passed from this life to the next on May 11th, 2023 in Tahlequah, OK. She was 69 years old and will be greatly missed.

She is preceded in death by her grandparents, her mother and father,

and several other family members.

Those left to cherish her memory include her children, Ricky G. Mitchell Jr. of Tahlequah, Solen Deerinwater of Tahlequah, Shena Deerinwater and Cody Deerinwater also of Tahlequah. She leaves her sister, Valerie Hudson and husband Phillip Joe of Bixby, OK



and lives on in her grandchildren, AJ Deerinwater, Roman Deerinwater and Aubriana Deerinwater and other grandchildren. She also leaves two nieces and one nephew, Elizabeth Hudson and Tara Gutierrez, and Jacob Hudson, and Tara's children, Kiowa and Kaylyn, as well as numerous friends that she loved in her lifetime. Memorial Services for Jacqueline Deerinwater were held in Swimmer Cemetery on May 22 with Pastor Sam Keener officiating. She was laid to rest next to her family.

Barbara Sue Wyatt

Barbara Sue Wyatt, 67, of Miami, Oklahoma, passed away at Freeman Medical Center, in Joplin, Missouri, on May 30, 2023. She was born July 22, 1955, in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to William and Opal (Christie) McKee. On February 5, 1977, she married Jack Wyatt Jr. in Commerce, Oklahoma. They



made their home in the Miami area where they raised their son, Justin Wyatt. She was a member of the Wayside Assembly of God Church, in Wyandotte, Oklahoma. Barbara

enjoyed working word puzzles, board

games, and games of chance. She loved her family and made great frybread. She loved family gatherings and having grandchildren around. Barbara held a special place in her heart for all her family. She will be missed by all who knew her.

Preceding Mrs. Wyatt are her parents, William, and Opal McKee, husband, Jack Wyatt Jr., and siblings, Kenny,

and Sadie McKee. Survivors include her son Justin and wife Mindy Wyatt, of Lithia, Florida, grandchildren, Jocelyn Wyatt, Brooklyn Wyatt, Maverick Wyatt, siblings, Bill McKee, Rick McKee, Mary Pickup, other relatives, and a host of friends.

Memorial services were held June 2, 2023, at Luginbuel Funeral Home in Vinita, Oklahoma.

LUNCH MENU

The United Keetoowah Band's Title VI Lunch Menu for July 2023 in the Jim Proctor Community Center at 18419 W. Keetoowah Circle in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. For information, call 918-871-2800.

July 3
Bologna/Cheese on Wheat, Potato Chips
Pasta Salad
Fruit Cup

July 4
UKB Offices Closed
Independence Day

July 5
Meatball Sub
Potato Chips
Pickle
Jell-O Cup

July 6
Chicken & Dumplings
Potatoes & Green Beans
Bread
Fruit Cup

July 7
Grilled Hot Dog
Fritos
Potato Salad
Jell-O Cup

July 10
Tuna Salad on Wheat
Potato Chips
3 Bean Salad
Fruit Cup

July 11
Meat/Cheese Nachos
Mexican Rice
Refried Beans
Pudding Cup

July 12
Pork Chops
Green Beans
Potatoes
Bread, Jell-O Cup

July 13
BBQ Chicken
Mashed Potatoes
Corn on Cob
Fruit Cup

July 14
Skillet Scrambled Burrito
Hashbrowns
Cinamon Roll
Yogurt & Orange Juice

July 17
BLT Sandwich
Vegetable Soup
Crackers
Peaches & Cream Cup

July 18
BBQ Chicken Wings
Onion Rings
Hot Roll
Jell-O Cup

July 19
UKB Offices Closed
Redbird Smith's
Birthday

July 20
BBQ Chopped Beef
Baked Beans
Pickle, Texas Toast
Fruit Cup

July 21
Chili Dogs
Fritos
Potato Salad
Watermelon

July 24
Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce
Italian Green Beans
Garlic Toast
Pudding Cup

July 25
Chicken Strips w/Gravy
Broccoli Casserole
Salad, Hot Roll
Jell-O Cup

July 26
Grilled Chicken Sub
Potato Chips
Pasta Salad
Fruit Cup

July 27
Cheeseburger w/Fixings
Steak Fries
Birthday Cake
Ice Cream

July 28
Kitchen Closed
Cleaning Day

July 31
Hamburger Stew
Hominy
Crackers
Dessert

Drink plenty of water. Please check on your elders and neighbors. Wado

If weather is bad there will be no home-delivered meals due to safety of driver.



RECIPES

To submit a recipe, email it to travissnell75@gmail.com or mail it to Giduwa Cherokee News, P.O. Box 746, Tahlequah, OK 74465.

Breakfast Smoothie With Berries and Greek Yogurt

Ingredients

- 1 cup plain nonfat strained yogurt (Greek or Icelandic)
- 1 cup frozen mixed berries or frozen mixed berries with cherries
- 1 tablespoon sweetener of choice
- 2 tablespoons nonfat milk or any tart juice (cranberry, pomegranate, cherry)

Instructions

Place all ingredients in a blender or a container for an immersion blender. Process until smooth. If you are not using frozen fruit, you will need to add several ice cubes to make the smoothie thick.



Chicken & Spinach Skillet Pasta with Lemon

Ingredients

- 8 ounces gluten-free penne pasta or whole-wheat penne pasta
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breast or thighs, trimmed, if necessary, and cut into bite-size pieces
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup dry white wine
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 10 cups chopped fresh spinach
- 4 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese, divided

Directions

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside.

Meanwhile, heat oil in a large high-sided skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken, salt and pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until just cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in wine, lemon juice and zest; bring to a simmer.

Remove from heat.

Stir in spinach and the cooked pasta. Cover and let stand until the spinach is just wilted. Divide among 4 plates and top each serving with 1 tablespoon Parmesan.

Catchall Lunch Salad

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups sliced romaine or leaf lettuce
- ¾ cup rinsed canned chickpeas
- ½ (5 ounce) can light tuna, drained
- ½ cup thinly sliced red cabbage or coleslaw mix
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved
- 2 scallions, sliced
- 1/4 cup Easy Anchovy Vinaigrette

Directions

Combine lettuce, chickpeas, tuna, cabbage (or coleslaw mix), tomatoes, and scallions in a medium bowl or food-storage container. Just before serving, add vinaigrette and toss to coat.

To make ahead

Refrigerate salad and dressing separately for up to 2 days. Toss together just before serving.



What Okla. lawmakers did, didn't do in healthcare

BY KEATON ROSS
Oklahoma Watch

OKLAHOMA CITY – House and Senate Republicans moved quickly to advance a bill outlawing certain transgender youth healthcare, but measures clarifying or carving out exceptions in the state's near-total abortion ban stalled early in the legislative process.

Here's a look at what state lawmakers did and didn't do on healthcare policy during the 2023, which ended May 26:

The Big Impact: Lawmakers passed a bill barring Oklahomans 18 and under from receiving gender-affirming care, though the state attorney general's office has agreed to delay its enforcement while a lawsuit challenging the measure is pending.

Senate Bill 613 prohibits healthcare providers from performing transition surgeries and giving puberty blockers to children and adolescents 17 and under. Physicians suspected of violating the terms of the law may be charged with a felony, face civil action and risk losing their professional licensing.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma filed a lawsuit seeking to overturn SB613,



A procedure room at the Tulsa Women's Clinic. RIP STELL FOR OKLAHOMA WATCH



14th Amendment. Attorney General Gentner Drummond agreed in May to temporarily block enforcement of the measure, saying in a statement the pause will give the state time to "mount the strongest possible defense" as the case progresses through federal court. Federal judges have temporarily blocked similar bans on

saying it unjustly targets transgender youth and violates their right to healthcare under the Equal Protection Clause of the

transgender youth healthcare passed in Arkansas and Alabama.

Also Notable: Beginning in November, fentanyl testing strips will be added to a list of items excluded from being classified as drug paraphernalia.

House Bill 1987 aims to prevent overdoses and help users who are trying to break an addiction, said author Mickey Dollens, D-Okla. City. Fentanyl overdoses killed 300 people statewide in 2021, according to the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics, up from 47 in 2019.

"Oklahoma is facing a serious addiction crisis and synthetic fentanyl is extremely deadly," Dollens said in an April statement.

Donate plasma to save lives

STATEPOINT MEDIA – Plasma donation is an impactful, meaningful way to give back to your community. By donating plasma, you can help people like Mabelle Pecoraro.

Pecoraro lives with Hereditary Angioedema (HAE), a disease that can cause attacks of swelling, and often pain, in specific parts of the body, including the stomach, hands, feet, arms, legs, genitals, throat and face. Like with many serious and rare diseases, the therapies used to treat HAE require plasma donations.

"Plasma donors directly impact my ability to live a full and productive life. Therapies made from these donations allow me and my son, who also lives with HAE, to receive ongoing treatment for our conditions," said Pecoraro.

Plasma carries red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets to maintain steady blood pressure, supports the immune system and delivers nutrients to cells.

Plasma donations are used to replace crucial proteins people living with rare and serious diseases lack, and to produce therapies that treat diseases such as primary immune deficiencies, hereditary angioedema, hemophilia, alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency and various bleeding and neurological disorders.

Every year, it takes more than 1,200 plasma donations to treat one hemophilia patient, more than 900 plasma donations to treat one alpha-1 patient and more than 130 plasma donations for one primary immune deficiency patient. To donate, you must be in good health, between the ages of 18-74, weigh at least 110 pounds, and have had no tattoos or piercings within the last four months. You must also meet the health and screening requirements and have valid identification with a permanent address.

Visit cslplasma.com for information and to find a center. The CSL Plasma donor app is also available.

Okla. board OKs religious charter school

The Catholic virtual charter school will be run by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Diocese of Tulsa.

BY PAUL MONIES
Oklahoma Watch

OKLAHOMA CITY – Despite the threat of lawsuits, an Oklahoma educational board on June 5 approved the nation's first application for public tax dollars for a religiously affiliated virtual charter school.

The Statewide Virtual Charter School Board voted 3-2 to approve a revised application by St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School.

The decision is certain to set up lawsuits that could go before the U.S. Supreme Court in a key test of the separation of church and state. At a minimum, the approval may run afoul of Oklahoma's Blaine Amendment, which forbids state money for the direct or indirect benefit of any religion or religious institution.

The Catholic virtual charter school will be run by the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City and the Diocese of Tulsa. Pending approval of a contract with the state, it expects to be able to take students by the fall of 2024. The virtual school would teach religious tenets similar to those found in traditional private Catholic schools.

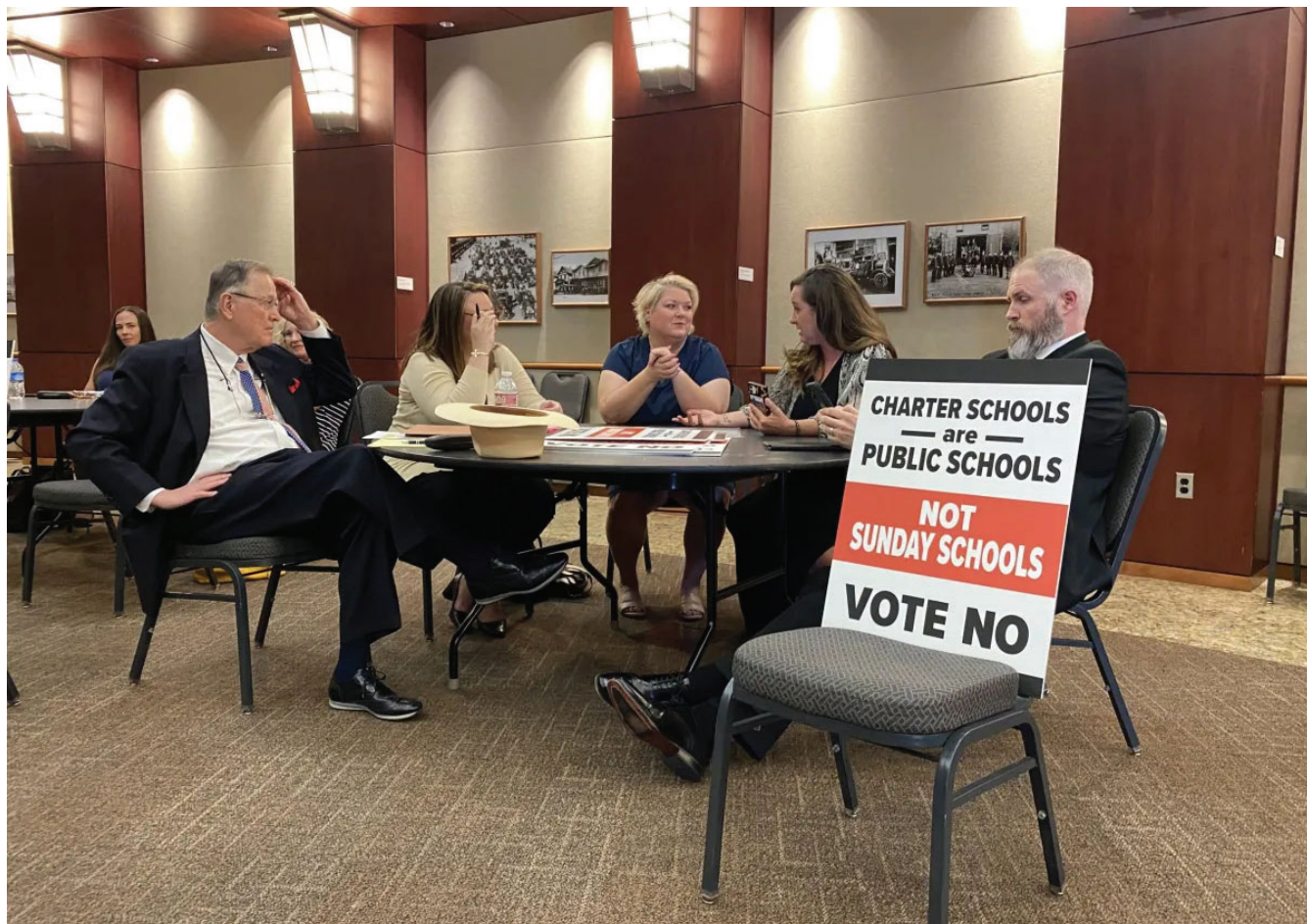
The 3-2 vote came after the board heard an update from school officials. Among those voting in favor was new board member Brian Bobek, an Oklahoma City businessman who previously served on the State Board of Education.

Oklahoma House Speaker Charles McCall appointed Bobek. Bobek signed his oath of office just before the vote on the Catholic virtual charter school.

Bobek's vote in favor came despite an appeal by board Chairman Robert Franklin at the start of the meeting that Bobek abstain. Bobek did not comment after the meeting. Franklin was joined by William Pearson in voting against the application. Board members Scott Strawn and Nellie Sanders voted to approve.

Brett Farley, executive director of the Catholic Conference of Oklahoma, said his group was excited by the vote. He said they'd be ready for any possible lawsuits.

"We think this is just an extension of what we've been doing in Oklahoma, which is providing more opportunities for education for kids that need it," Farley said.



Opponents of an application by a Catholic virtual charter school wait for the start of a meeting by the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City on Monday, June 5, 2023. PAUL MONIES/OKLAHOMA WATCH



would help children who need special education. "I've watched schools and I've watched families and I've watched teachers who sometimes have a difficult time meeting all of the needs that are presented. It's a difficult, hard process," Franklin said. "I just don't think that they (the virtual school) felt that was going to be onerous."

In an interview with reporters after the meeting, Franklin said he was disappointed in the vote and disheartened by the contention that the board was just playing a role in the inevitable next step at court.

Apart from the discussion on the constitutionality of the application, Franklin said it continued to fall short on how the Catholic virtual school

The approval came just two months after the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board unanimously rejected an earlier version of the school's application.

That rejection came amid threats of possible lawsuits, including an assertion by Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond that his office could not represent board members who went against their oath of office.

On June 5, Drummond again reiterated his position that the vote was unconstitutional.

"The approval of any publicly funded religious school is contrary to Oklahoma law and not in the best interest of taxpayers," Drummond said in a statement. "It's extremely disappointing that board members violated their oath in order to fund religious schools with our tax dollars. In doing so, these members have exposed themselves and the State to potential legal action that could be costly."

2022-2023 GRADUATE

Paul Matthew Frogg

Northeastern State Univ.

Paul Frogg of Kansas, Oklahoma, will graduate in December from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah with a bachelor's degree in health and human performance and a minor in social services. He is the son of Brian and Niki Frogg of Kansas, Oklahoma, and the grandson of Marlin and Patty Mayes of Fayetteville, Arkansas, and of the late Leon and Francine Frogg. He is passionate about health and sports, and was involved in football and basketball during junior high and high school years. He recently became certified as a personal trainer as well. He plans to work as a personal trainer or in the sports health field and marry his fiancée.



UKB Venue now available to rent



The UKB Venue is located at 109 W. Willis Road in Tahlequah, Oklahoma. The UKB bought the site in 2022 with federal American Rescue Plan funding. PHOTOS BY LANI HANSEN/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

The Venue was purchased by UKB, it is available for parties and events.

BY LANI HANSEN
Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH – Looking for a place to rent out for an event? The United Keetoowah Band has that place for you. Come check out The UKB Venue in Tahlequah.

According to Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche, The Venue was purchased by UKB in 2022 through the American Rescue Plan funding. Before it was given the name, the building was formerly known as T-bones Steakhouse. With the purchase of the building, UKB has planned to utilize it for gatherings for tribal and non-tribal members.

The tribe has used it for their 2022 Tri-Council meeting area, 2023 Council Inauguration, Veteran’s Day lunch, 2023 UKB Education Graduation party, gatherings for the employees and is currently being used by the Title VI program.

The Title VI program serves lunches to the elders, drive-thru only during the week Monday through Friday unless the tribe is closed for holidays. They have been using the kitchen area as they wait for the Jim Proctor Elderly Community Center to re-open.

The UKB Venue is available to rent for birthdays, weddings, reunions and other events. It is currently managed by Bud Vance. The tribe is hoping to make this an actual event center one day for larger gatherings.

“Just this last year we have rented it out for several birthday parties and celebrations,” Vance said. “We even rented it out to for a watch party for a council candidate for Cherokee Nation.”

Because it is owned by the tribe, alcohol use is prohibited. The kitchen appliances and equipment are off limits to those who rent out the building. Tables and chairs are provided, which are set up and taken down by manager upon request.

Payments are to be discussed with the manager of the UKB Venue. An agreement for the use of the building must be filled out and returned to the manager.

For more information about renting out The UKB Venue, contact Bud Vance at 918-623-4722.

The UKB Venue is located at 109 W. Willis Road in Tahlequah.

“Just this last year we have rented it out for several birthday parties and celebrations. We even rented it out to for a watch party for a council candidate for Cherokee Nation.”

Bud Vance, The UKB Venue manager



Tables are stacked on tables at The UKB Venue, Before it was renamed, the building was formerly known as T-bones Steakhouse. With the purchase of the building, United Keetoowah Band officials have planned to utilize it for gatherings for tribal and non-tribal members.



The UKB Venue also includes a pool table. Because it is owned by the tribe, alcohol use is prohibited. For information about renting out The UKB Venue, call Bud Vance at 918-623-4722. An agreement for the use of the building must be completed and returned to the manager before use.

Don't let battery chargers ignite a disaster: Top fire prevention tips

STATEPOINT MEDIA – According to the National Fire Protection Association, local U.S. fire departments responded to an estimated 1.35 million fires in 2021 – an average of every 23 seconds. These fires resulted in 3,800 civilian deaths and 14,700 reported civilian injuries, but the devastation didn't stop there. They also resulted in an estimated \$15.9 billion in property damage loss.

Fires can affect not just the health and safety of family, friends and community, but also take a major financial toll on homeowners and businesses. The International Code Council's 2023 Building Safety Month campaign focuses on general building safety awareness, including how to recognize and practice fire prevention strategies and be aware of potential risks in your home or business.

Over the years, lithium-ion batteries and chargers have caused many fires. Found within household products such as electronic toys, small and large appliances, headphones, cellphones, laptops and more, their popularity has grown thanks to their high-energy density and longer lifespan. But with this growth comes the need to learn how to properly handle these products.

Below are actionable steps and fire prevention tips from Beth Tubbs, chief fire protection engineer for the Code Council, to help ensure lithium-ion batteries and chargers are used and stored safely. These are general tips, so refer to each device's owner manual for specific safety instructions.

Buyer Beware: Only purchase an appliance or device with a lithium-ion battery and charger from reputable manufacturers to ensure it's designed, manufactured, tested and maintained according to applicable safety standards.

Use an Approved Battery Charger, Correctly: When charging a lithium-ion battery, use a proper charger that is manufacturer-approved or listed as acceptable on the device. Lithium-ion batteries are sensitive to charging conditions and using an incorrect charger, or using it incorrectly, can result in the battery overcharging. When a battery overcharges, it can overheat,

catch fire and possibly explode.

Never charge lithium-ion batteries when you aren't home to supervise it. If a potentially dangerous situation does arise, you can act quickly to rectify it by unplugging the battery, using a portable fire extinguisher or calling your local fire department for help. When charging appliances, such as micromobility devices (scooters and e-bikes), plug them directly into the electrical receptacle, not through multiplug adaptors or extension cords.

Follow the manufacturer's guidelines, including the recommended charge time. This will increase the safety and performance of your battery.

Location, Location, Location: When it comes to safety, where you use a lithium-ion battery device or charger is important. Because these batteries can pose a fire risk, it is crucial that they aren't located in front of an exit or escape route. If the battery is mishandled or exposed to extreme conditions and a fire erupts, you will need an escape route.

Store batteries in a cool, dry environment to maintain their performance and safety. It is recommended to store batteries indoors, away from direct sunlight, excess heat, combustibles and potentially flammable substances.

Follow Maintenance Guidelines: Reputable manufacturers provide instructions on how to best maintain the performance and safety of their batteries, often found online or in the device or appliance's maintenance guide.

Some maintenance tips include:

- Regularly inspecting the battery and charger for visible damage
- Routinely checking the battery's charge status
- Observing and noting the runtime of your battery (and any changes in this time)

- Disconnecting the battery from the charger once it reaches full capacity.

Lithium-ion battery fires can start in a matter of seconds; it's important to use them safely. Visit iccsafe.org for resources to help you understand and implement fire prevention measures and protect your home or business.



OPEN/ILLEGAL DUMPSIGHT CLEAN-UP

GUIDELINES:

- Must be an enrolled UKB tribal member over the age of 18.
- Proof of Ownership/Residency (ex. utility bill) must be provided.
- Applications must be completely filled out.
- Must not benefit a business or any party who is not a UKB tribal member.
- Must reside within the UKB Service Area. (Cooweescoowee, Delaware, Saline, Goingsnake, Tahlequah, Canadian, Illinois, Flint, Sequoyah)

OES@UKB-NSN.GOV
(918) 871-2765

Request an application today or view on the website!
ukb-nsn.gov/environmental



Wacoche family revives community garden

Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche helps maintain a community garden for the Keetoowah people.

BY LANI HANSEN
Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH – A garden that was started two years ago, has now been revived by the family of United Keetoowah Band Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche.

“We checked out the property which was being unused, so me and my family took it upon ourselves to obtain some seeds with the help of maintenance coming out and tilling for us,” Wacoche said.

The garden was maintained by the UKB Title VI program in 2021, starting out as a community garden. It was placed on the tribal complex behind the Wellness Center, located by the Jim Proctor Elderly Community Center.

“I remember when Title VI had another garden here, it was back in 2005 through 2007 and we used to gather all the produce placing them in the front lobby of the service building for people who wanted some could take what we had,” Wacoche said.

Growing up, Wacoche’s grandpa had a garden and one of his memories from that was trying out the hot peppers.

He would like to see this garden be utilized by not just his family but others so what is produced will help provide for



A revived community garden is between the UKB Wellness Center and Jim Proctor Elderly Community Center in Tahlequah. PHOTOS BY LANI HANSEN/GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS



Tomatoes begin to sprout at the community garden in Tahlequah.



A photo of the garden before it was treated. It now has six sections of fruits and vegetables.

someone’s table.

“My wife is the main one who works in the garden, and I go help in the evening times,” Wacoche said. “But we do welcome anybody who wants to come help maintain it or have any new ideas to produce. It is hard work, and I recommend having a green thumb.”

When the Wacoche family first saw the area of the garden, it was overgrown with weeds where the fence posts were up, but the fencing was not placed.

They put in a lot of work to get it started with pulling weeds, fencing and sectioning out the garden.

The community garden, as Wacoche calls it, currently has six sections of either fruit or vegetable growing.

There are tomatoes, lettuce, yellow onion, green onion and cucumbers.

“Once our first round of produce comes out, I would like to see the garden grow larger,” Wacoche said.

He hopes to see more people out in the garden helping. Tools are provided shovels, rakes and water hose.

“We are looking for a gate, we had some deer come through when we first started,” Wacoche said. “And be prepared to haul water, we use about ten gallons a day.”

When the garden has produced a large amount, Wacoche plans to place what was grown in the front lobby of the community service building for people to grab and go.

If anyone would like to help in the garden contact Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche at 918-871-2822.

The garden is located at 18300 West Keetoowah Circle in Tahlequah.

UKB member showcases talent for Carl Albert State softball team

Reagan Longbird Smith is ranked fifth in stolen bases in the NJCAA conference.

BY LANI HANSEN
Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH – A United Keetoowah Band member, Reagan Longbird Smith is making a name for herself in college softball. She is currently ranked number 5 in stolen bases for Carl Albert.

Smith grew up in Bunch, Oklahoma, a small community outside of Stilwell. She is the daughter of Christopher Smith and Natasha Storm. Smith is also the granddaughter of Florene Smith. She attended high school at Sequoyah High School and graduated from Stilwell. During Smith’s freshman year at Sequoyah, she was on the softball team when they won state.

“It was during my junior year when I transferred to Stilwell, because of COVID,” Smith said. “I did play softball there too.”

Smith has been playing softball since she could walk.

She will be going into her sophomore year at Carl Albert State College, studying

in allied health to be a physical therapist. Smith plays in the left-field position for the Lady Vikings.

With one year of college ball under her belt, Smith has been ranked number 5 in stolen bases in the National Junior College Athletic Association. She was also named Offensive Player of the Year for Carl Albert Softball.

If it was not for her supporters, she would not be where she is today.

“I want to thank my family and friends for pushing me on going to college,” Smith said. “I want to thank them for always being by my side when things get rough.”

Aside from college ball, Smith is currently working with the Stilwell Nursing Home. She also enjoys helping with events at the Greasy Community Center. Smith will return to college in August where she will continue playing softball.

For the 2023-2024 softball season schedule, visit <https://www.cascathletics.com/sports/sball/index>.

“I want to thank my family and friends for pushing me on going to college. I want to thank them for always being by my side when things get rough.”

Reagan Longbird Smith, Carl Albert State freshman



UKB member and Carl Albert State College student-athlete Reagan Longbird Smith grew up in Bunch and graduated from Stilwell High School. COURTESY PHOTOS



UKB Summer Youth participants, sitting around table, learn the Keetoowah language from UKB language instructors, from top left to right, John Chewey, Tyler Hodges and Oleta Pritchett. MARILYN CRAIG/UKB MUSEUM

UKB Summer Youth gain valuable employment, cultural experience

BY MARILYN CRAIG
UKB Museum Marketing Coordinator

TAHLEQUAH – The UKB Summer Youth Program began on June 5 with 10 young adults signed up for the program, which was available to exclusive Keetoowah ages 16-24.

Participants in the program consisted of Mia Allen, Zayden Dreadfulwater, Teala Wildcat-Johnson, Kyndal Neugin, Jesse Sexton, Sebastian Sexton, Aubrey Smith, Delia Smith, Nevaeh Thirsty and Kadden Whitmire.

Most of the students work Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. All were given the opportunity to work in an area they plan to pursue in their education or in a location that interested them.

“We wanted to put together a program that would engage our young people and give them a variety of work experiences, and also teach them about the tribe,” said Sara Thompson, UKB Human Resources Director. “I connected with our John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah museum assistant director Barbara Girty Foster and the marketing/public relations coordinator Marilyn Craig, and we all put our heads together to come up with a program that would be educational and fun.”

“Cultural Fridays are what we came up with, and it has been very educational and entertaining

already,” said Girty Foster. On the first Friday, we went downtown to visit three museums. It was a fun morning. Human Resources is also providing lunch for the students on Friday. So, the students do cultural activities in the morning and after then after lunch, our language instructors teach them the Keetoowah language, practicing and tweaking the curriculum they have developed.”

“I joined the UKB summer work program because I enjoy being active within my tribe and community. It provides many different opportunities for members to gain new work experience and learn more in depth about how UKB functions. I especially enjoy cultural activity Fridays and learning how to make crafts that make me feel more culturally involved. I like getting to see the new items being brought into the gift shop and some of the archived pieces while working at the museum,” said student Mia Allen.

On June 16, the group painted gourd masks, made corn husk dolls, and made a basket. After a corn dog and chili lunch, topped off with strawberry shortcake, they all settled down for a two-hour language lesson. On June 23, the group was set to make pinch pots, mini stick ball sticks and a stick ball.

The UKB Summer Youth Program was set to run for eight weeks and end July 28. For more information, call Thompson at 918-871-2800.

UKB Museum’s ‘Back to Basics’ series begins

BY MARILYN CRAIG
UKB Museum Marketing Coordinator

TAHLEQUAH – The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum kicked off the “Back to Basics” series at the Speedway on June 17.

Keetoowah traditional elder and culture bearer Betty Holcomb began the class talking about her experiences with canning. Like most women of an era 60 years or longer ago, Betty learned to can when she was just a child, and it was a regular summer and fall activity from then on.

“It just tastes so much better when you grow it yourself,” said Holcomb. “You also know exactly what goes into the food you are eating. No GMOs and no additives.”

While the class did not grow the berries, the berries came right off the field the evening before the class.

“We would like to thank Miller Farms in Stilwell for making these berries available,” said Barbara Girty Foster, JHCCM assistant director.

The project of the day was making strawberry freezer jam, and all the participants were eager to learn these skills. As the women prepared the strawberries, they talked about their childhood, their mothers, aunts and grandmothers. They also shared things they learned from them and canning and gathering experiences. One participant said she used to help her mom pick and snap green beans and that one of her favorite memories is of her mom sitting on the porch snapping green beans.

“At a time when many things are too new and confusing, something old and familiar feels very comforting. Growing, harvesting, and preserving food is one of those practices. It is also a way to connect with our ancestors, who had no choice but to hunt and gather food. It takes us back to our roots, and back to nature, and for many of us, it is a great place to be.” said Girty Foster.

The next class in the canning series will be held on July 8. The participants will learn how to can corn and green beans.

The last class of the canning series will focus on making bread and butter pickles and dill pickles and will be held Aug. 12. For more information, call the museum at 918-871-2866.

“It just tastes so much better when you grow it yourself. You also know exactly what goes into the food you are eating.”

Betty Holcomb, Tribal Elder

HASTAS

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Visit UKB Media office in the UKB Services building to purchase. (918)871-2800