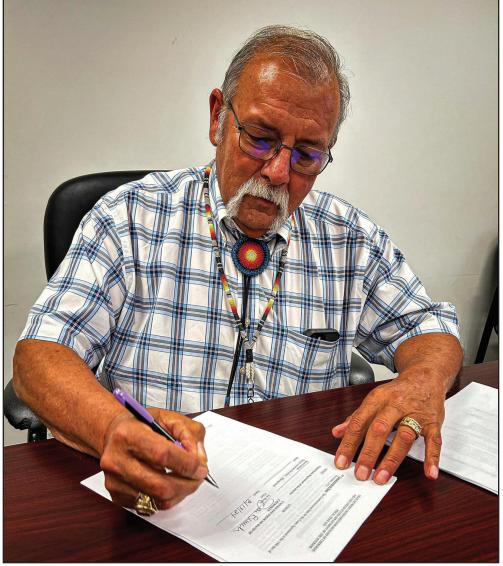


### **DUWA CHEROKEE NEWS** ሃSG. CWY A & Policial News Publication of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma August 2024



### **Chief Bunch Signs Historic** Lease Agreement

By: Troy Littledeer | UKB Media @troylittledeer August 19, 2024

TAHLEQUAH, Okla., – On August 13, Chief Joe Bunch signed an agreement with the Department of Interior to reimburse the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma for certain costs associated with the UKB's operation of programs under the tribe's Self-Governance Compact.

Under this agreement, known as an ISDEAA Section 105 (l) lease, the BIA will commit to paying an additional annual payment to the UKB Tribe based upon the appraised fair market rental rate.

"This is a tremendous day for the UKB as these agreements provide vital rental revenue to the Tribe as well as funding for utilities, building security, upkeep, and those types of things," Chief Joe Bunch said.

This arrangement with the BIA, as well as similar pledges made with the Indian Health Service, will allow the UKB to receive annual general rent revenue in excess of \$1.2 million.

UKB tribal member and attorney Bryan Shade with the assistance of the [UKB] Tribal Finance, Facilities, and Self-Governance Programs staff, helped negotiate the ISDEAA Section 105(l) lease.

**Photo Troy Littledeer** 

### UKB Elder Housing Project Passes First Hurdle

#### **By: Lee Guthrie** August 19, 2024

TAHLEQUAH, Okla., - A United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indian housing project for elders passed its first hurdle, with the city leaders recommending a zoning change to develop a modular home community.

The 18-unit, nine duplex project is proposed for 10 acres unofficially known as "Old Whiskey Jim's" property. The zone change was approved by the Planning Commission July 27. "We call it the 'Venue' - until we come up with another name for it," said Housing Director Roxana Wilden. "The tribe owns the building and its parking lot. Housing owns the field next to it, and where we want to put the duplexes."

the proposed development and attended the meeting to express her hope that the trees on the wooded acreage wouldn't be cut down for the project. She said the mobile homes/modular units are nice looking and hoped the buildings and site will be kept up.

Assistant Director Richard Vann assured Whittmore that the property will be maintained for the elder inhabitants.

required to meet all regulations and zoning ordinances and the proposed would be allowed by right," Harjo said.

that a mobile home park will have to abide by."

Wilden addressed the Commission and said that 100 UKB elders need housing. The units were purchased by American Rescue Plan Act funds, Wilden

cans with Disabilities Act compliant. A park and walking path are also planned for the community.

Chair Richard Cannonie "It is the rules and regulations asked if the tribe was aware that the zone change would cover the whole 10 acres, not just the five where the homes will sit, and all city codes for landscaping would apply for the entire plat.

> The petitioning parties agreed to abide by all the rules and reg-

The "Venue" is close to the UKB offices off of Willis Road, Wilden said.

Zoned RM-2, which is multi-family medium-density/ community commercial, the application requested a change to RMH, which is the designation for a mobile home park.

The modular homes were built by Oak Creek Homes in Texas and sold to UKB by Stepp Mobile Homes. Each building has two duplexes, and each unit is 1,009 square feet.

"I've had 38 years in the mobile home business, and when we saw these we knew it would be a good fit for them," said Pat Ross, the developer and owner of Stepp.

Tribal Councilor Pete Kingfisher attended the meeting to support the Housing Department's application.

"We need it for our elders," Kingfisher said.

Mary Ann Whittmore lives across from the entrance to

"We are going to try and save as many trees as possible, and the ones we have to take out we are going to replant," Wilden said.

Whittmore's son, who did not attend, is concerned about the need for a bigger drainage system, and Wilden said bids are being solicited to make those improvements.

Planning and Development Director Paige Harjo presented the project to the Commission, and said after nearly two months of consideration the staff recommends approval of the zoning change.

"[The property] is designated as residential reserve, and keep that in mind in how it relates to the comprehensive plan," Harjo said. "In our comprehensive plan it states: 'Our current demand models may indicate that a particular density will be most likely to serve the market, but changes in economic and development patterns in the next 10-15 years may create a need we cannot anticipate today."

The residential reserve areas are intended to have housing developments at some point and time and this area was designated for this when the plan was put together, Harjo said.

"If the zoning change is approved the owner will be said.

"This project will house up to 36 elders," Wilden said. "Manufactured homes are an efficient and reliable way to house elders quickly; easy to construct, easy to maintain, and the right size for most single or couple elders."

Vann said the homes are built to Housing and Urban Development standards and are Ameriulations for the entire property.

The commissioners voted unanimously to approve the change in zoning. The Tahlequah City Council must approve the change before it is finalized.

This story comes to Giduwa Cherokee News from Lee Guthrie through her reporting work with the Tahlequah Daily Press.



Housing Director, Roxana Wilden represented the UKB in the request before the planning commission, Photo Lee Guthrie, Tahlequah Daily Press.

#### GIDUWAH CHEROKEE NEWS



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Flint Dist. Frankie Still 918-507-1822





**By: UKB Chief Joe Bunch** July 16, 2024

Si yo, ni ga da

Where did summer go? Kids are already back in school, so watch out in the early morning and afternoon traffic as kids are loading or unloading off school buses in rural Oklahoma. Is your high school football team preparing for the upcoming season? Boy, its been hot

Last month we had the opportunity to show who we are by hosting the Leadership Native Oklahoma Conference, and we just finished with Oklahoma Intertribal Tax Association here at the venue and on our grounds. We thank both associations for allowing us to partner with them in their work improving, informing, and bringing Native America to the forefront. It is always a pleasure and honor to showcase our buildings and the history of who we are.

We just completed the Ecohta Behavioral Health outreach with the Goingsnake district; we hosted an elder's event with food, program activities, and we played bingo. It is always great to see elders from the communities. Elder and language teacher John Chewey



### Chief's Corner JOE BUNCH Principal Chief

jbunch@ukb-nsn.gov

was on hand to explain and gain information from the elders while talking in Cherokee; to hear all speak in Cherokee was good medicine as the words were familiar. It was difficult to understand all of the conversation.

We are still in serious IHS negotiations, and things are moving in our direction. By the time you read this message, we will have the resources to start a clinic for our tribal people-no more being denied or discriminated against because we are Keetoowah-no more suppression of medical services or no more holding medical services as leverage to get our tribal members to switch tribes. Thank you, Lord, for answering my prayer in our own medical facility; you are most gracious. This administration and council have secured an opportunity to provide medical services to our tribal people, meaning we have laid the groundwork to have a clinic on our tribal grounds.

**AUGUST 2024** 

By the time you read this, we will be in full election time, and as time goes on, the names of candidates will be listed. I need to tell you it has been a privilege and honor to serve the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians. I have worked in Indian Country for 41 years, 19 years for the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians. I have always said working at Keetoowah is like coming home and working for Indian people. I have decided not to run for reelection; it has been my greatest honor to serve our tribe. If needed, I'll be a phone call away. We have a strong team in place, and if all are reelected, we will and can lead and move our tribal government into the next level, generating services for our tribal members. Unfinished items like supplemental food distribution, solar or wind power generation, affordable housing, continued medical services, and a casino are in store; we have put a lot of items in motion.

This is a historical time for the Keetoowahs.

Wa do, do da go hv i

Chief Joe Bunch

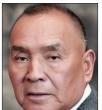


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**GIDUWAH CHEROKEE NEWS** 

### **Language Pilot Program Completion Celebrated at Social**

"Hopefully, these types of Keetoowah language events will attract more people as time goes on. We honor our ancestors, as well as future generations, by learning and speaking our native tongue," said Ernestine Berry, Museum Director.

#### By: Marilyn Craig, Museum Marketing Coordinator

TAHLEQUAH, OK -- The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah museum staff hosted another Keetoowah Language Gathering on Friday, August 9th. The event was held at the Tahlequah District Community Building. The gathering was a celebration of the completion of a community pilot program for Keetoowah conversational language. The program was funded in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. The gathering featured a traditional meal, gospel singing, ring toss competition and a language bowl.

The goal of the program was to develop a multigenerational language curriculum and program that is geared to native learners of all ages. JHCCM Director Ernestine Berry, along with Keetoowah first language speakers John Chewey, Clara Proctor, Oleta Pritchett, and Tyler Hodge developed the curriculum.

When it was time to roll out the program to communities, three additional Keetoowah first language speakers joined the team including Cindy Hair, Ronnie Livers, and Alice Wilder. These speakers began teaching the language program in their communities.

The 2024 Language students who completed all forty lessons include Angelina Badillo, Robin Bailey, Kyle Bark, Robert Bark, Latisha Blackbear, Anthony Blackbear, Natalie Blackbear, Kaiden Blackbear, Kristie Bradley, Amber Dry, Antoinette



Keetoowah language instructors include: (front row) Cindy Hair, Alice Jumper and Oleta Pritchett (back row) Ronnie Livers, John Chewey, Tyler Hodges, and museum director Ernestine Berry. Not shown is Clara Proctor (photo Raelie Grayson)

Ford, Caleb Grimmett, Tishaleta Guevara, Jarrett Hammer, Ashley Hopton, Charlie Stilwell, Charolotte Teehee, Acee Watt, and Kendra Wiegand.

Museum student archivist Kyndal Aimerson coordinated the Language Bowl. She said, "Everyone enjoyed it, and it was encouraging to see the students' improvement since May in the Language Bowl. The first time we played it was a little messy, but everyone did so well in the last game.

I hope this shows that we are accomplishing something here by revitalizing the language. There aren't a great number of students, but the ones we have are going to go far in speaking. They all have a desire to learn, which a lot of people don't have. I am still learning to speak and seeing everyone at the language social was really encouraging."

Museum Director Ernestine Berry said, "The teachers and I are very encouraged by the progress the students made this past year. The students were also pleased and expressed a desire to continue learning. We are hopeful that we will be able to expand on the curriculum created by our first-language curriculum developers to continue with the program.



Tyler Hodge entertains the crowd as he strikes a pose during the ring toss game. (photo Raelie Grayson)

### **Echota Behavioral Health Hosts Keetoowah Elder Day**

Keetoowah Elder Day brings in elders to shape and strengthen our knowledge into our overall wellness.

#### LANI HANSEN, REPORTER

KANSAS, Okla- Elders play an important role in shaping our communities. That is why Echota Behavioral Health is working alongside others to bring forth strength from our elders into our overall wellness.

On August 20th, the United Keetoowah Band and Echota Behavioral Health hosted an "Keetoowah Elder Day" in the Goingsnake District.

"We look back at what each community used to be by gathering the wisdom and knowledge of the elders, and bridging the gap with our current generation to learn how to build that up," Community Prevention Coordinator Caleb Grimmett-Smith stated. "The elders are still value to us, and we hope to take what we have learned from the communities to incorporate in any events we do."

Prevention Teams Manager Brittany Cheater also added, "We know the elders are leaders of the family, so when there is a problem or celebration the family usually goes to them. So, we want to be able to bridge that gap for behavioral health or mental health, and let people know what services



Adalene Smith and John Chewey admire a tool belt that was raffled off at the Goingsnake District Elder Day.

are out there."

The "Keetoowah Elder Day" is meant to connect and engage with elders, to learn from them. Echota Behavioral Health has already made plans to continue hosting these events in other communities with different topics.

The day consisted of informational session from various departments in the UKB such as Title XI, Human Services, Environmental, Housing, Tribal Court, Indian Child Welfare and the John Hair Cultural Center and Museum. Lunch was provided to all those in attendance.

Keetoowah member Sharon Benoit stated, "I enjoyed it, I am glad we learned more about the Tribal Court. Any information we did receive regarding the elders, was positive and needed to be shared."

Echota Behavioral Health will be hosting another "Keetoowah Elder Day" in November. For more information, contact 918-871-2800.

TOURNAMEN

UKB 74TH CELEBRATION

### UKB Annual Golf Tournament Opens Registration

#### Registration opens September 1 for the Senior, 2-man and 4-man scramble

#### LANI HANSEN, REPORTER

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- On the first weekend of October the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians will celebrate the 74th annual celebration.

Along with all the festivities offered during the weekend of October 3-6, is the UKB Annual Golf tournament held at Cherokee Springs Golf Club. The tournament consists of three categories the 2-man senior 60 and over scramble, the 2-man scramble open and the 4-man scramble.

Beginning on Oct. 3rd, the 2-man senior scramble will have sign-ins at 8 a.m. with tee time at 8:30 a.m. Lunch will be provided to seniors participating in the tournament. Following the senior scramble, the 2-man open will start sign-ins at 12:30 p.m. with tee time beginning at 1:30 p.m.

On Friday, Oct. 4th, the 4-man scramble sign-ins will begin at 8 a.m. with tee time at 9 a.m. Lunch will be provided to participants in the 4-man scramble.

There will be door and cash prizes for each scramble, so be sure to register to get your team in. Registration opens on the first day of September. The senior scramble and 2-man scramble are only taking 40 teams. The 4-man scramble is taking 25 teams.

To register please contact, Larry Pritchett at 918-506-7554.



The UKB Annual Golf Tournament will take place on October 3-4, 2024.



Registration forms and rules are avaiable online ukb-nsn.gov/celebration2024

**1st and 2nd Place T-Shirts** 1st Place Wins Half of the Pot

For more information call Sabrina Washington (918) 316-8717 Keith Washington (918) 525-8265

Per Team

### **Announcing the LNO 2024 Graduating Class**

(OSAGE RESERVATION) Leadership Native Oklahoma (LNO) proudly announces the graduation of its Class of 2024. Facilitated by the American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma (AICCO), this cohort of dynamic leaders has successfully completed the program, which is dedicated to empowering Native American leaders and allies with the tools, knowledge, and connections to drive positive change in their communities.

Over the past several months, the LNO Class of 2024 has engaged in a series of immersive classes, discussions, and interactive learning opportunities designed to explore the forces and trends shaping Native American businesses, tribes, and allied enterprises. The program offered participants one-of-a-kind introductions to distinguished community and tribal leaders, providing unique insights into leadership, innovation, and community impact.

"The Class of 2024 has demonstrated remarkable dedication, enthusiasm, and a deep commitment to their communities," said AICCO State President Bailey Walker. "We are incredibly proud of their achievements and look forward to witnessing the lasting impact they will have as they continue to lead and inspire others."

A graduation was held for the LNO Class of 2024 at Osage Casino Tulsa on Thursday, August 15. The Osage Singers honored our graduates and guests with performances and DJ Matchison performed long into the night.

Leadership Native Oklahoma is more than a leadership program—it is a supportive environment where leaders engage in transformational dialogues and connect with like-minded individuals who share a passion for making a difference. Graduates of LNO are equipped not only with enhanced leadership skills but also with a powerful network of peers and mentors who will support them throughout their careers.

For more information about Leadership Native Oklahoma and the Class of 2024, please visit https://aiccok.org/leadership-native-oklahoma/

#### About Leadership Native Oklahoma:

Leadership Native Oklahoma is a leadership development program focused on empowering Native American leaders and allies to drive innovation and positive change in their communities. Through a combination of immersive learning experiences, mentorship, and networking, LNO prepares participants to lead with vision, integrity, and a deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities facing Native American communities.

Contact: Bailey Walker, State President American Indian Chamber of Commerce of Oklahoma (AICCO) baileywalker333@yahoo.com



UKB member Dr. Corey Still and Baily Walker. Courtesy photo.



UKB member Trista Vaughn and Baily Walker. Courtesy photo.

UKB Members Trista Vaughn and Dr. Corey Still were graduates of the 2024 Leadership Native Oklahoma class.

### **Museum Summer Canning Series in the Books**

"The canning series has ended for 2024, but participants are already looking forward to participating in 2025, so if you are interested you need to register today," said Assistant Museum director Barbara Girty Foster.

#### **By: Marylin Craig**

TAHLEQUAH, OK - The John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum wrapped up the canning portion of the Getting Back to Basics summer canning series on Saturday, August 10. The last class included canning peaches and making peach jam. The students began the process by putting clean jars face down in a big flat pan on top of the stove. This sterilized the jars and lids. All the peaches were initially washed, then they were put in a pot of boiling water for less than a minute, then plunged into an ice water bath. This allowed



the skins to come off easily, so there was not a lot of waste.

After the peaches were peeled, each peach was cut in half and the seed removed. Then they were sliced into a big pot. Lemon juice was added to the peaches to preserve the color, and they were put on the stove to reach a boil. Students filled quart jars with peaches and liquid to the jar rim. The next step was wiping the rim of the jar to make sure there was nothing that would keep the jars from sealing. The lid was added, and a jar ring was put on tightly.

Preparing peaches for jam was the same process, with the addition of sugar and gelatin and bringing it to a boil. Students made pint jars of the jam. All the jars of peaches were beautiful, and everyone was pleased with their accomplishments.

"I have really enjoyed hosting these Back to Basic workshops, it's been so much fun getting to meet all the participants, laughing at ourselves in the kitchen and best of all learning lifelong skills from elder tribal member and culture bearer Betty Holcomb. The canning series has ended for 2024, but participants are already looking forward to participating in 2025, so if you are interested you need to register today," said Assistant Museum director Barbara Girty Foster. For more information, call 918-871-2866.



These peaches, jam and pickles will be shared with museum committees, special guests and volunteers.

Pretty as a peach, Janelle Adair shows off the Porter peaches before making peach jam.

## **Giduwa Cherokee News**

P.O. Box 746

Tahlequah, OK 74465

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**Giduwa Cherokee News** 

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OK 74465. MANAGING EDITOR/REPORTER Troy Littledeer

SENIOR REPORTER - Lani Hansen

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#### **AUGUST 2024**

### **SCOTUS sides with Native tribes in health care funding dispute**

#### By: Lee Guthrie August 19, 2024

TAHLEQUAH, Okla., – Tahlequah's two federally recognized Native American tribes are moving to expand their health care offerings after the U.S. Supreme Court paved the way.

The tribes won a victory June 27 when a court ruling sided with them on a dispute with the federal government over health care costs in their communities.

The 5-4 ruling puts the onus on the government to cover millions in overhead costs that two Cherokee County-based tribes faced when taking control over their own health care programs. This shift was due to a law meant to give tribes more local control.

"The U.S. Supreme Court decision in Becerra v. San Carlos Apache Tribe is a victory for all of Indian Country," said Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. "Since Cherokee Nation assumed self-governance over our health care system, we have dramatically improved the quality of care and services available to tribal citizens."

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act enables an Indian tribe to enter into a "self-determination contract" with the Indian Health Service to assume responsibility for administering the health care programs that IHS would otherwise operate for the tribe, states the summary of the ruling by SCO-TUS.

Hoskin said the reinvestment of revenue by CN into expanded care did not receive the support of other federal health care programs.

"With this ruling, self-governance tribes will finally receive that equitable support," Hoskin said. "Thank you to Chief Justice [John] Roberts and the other justices who joined in this decision, which moves the United States closer to fulfilling its trust responsibility to tribes."

First, IHS must provide to the tribe the "Secretarial Amount," which is not less than the congressionally appropriated amount IHS would use to operate programs; second, a contracting tribe can collect revenue from third-party payers like Medicare, Medicaid and private insurers; and the third-party funds are called "program income" and must be used by tribes to "further the general purposes of the contract" with IHS, states the summary.

Bryan Shade, attorney for United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, said the issue before SCOTUS was more nuanced than just covering the cost of billing to these third-party payers.

"For background, Public Law 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, authorizes tribes to assume control of certain federal programs by contract or compact and administer them to their citizens on behalf of the federal government," Shade said. The "Secretarial Amount" refers to the money from the appropriate secretary, and in this case it is Secretary of Health and Human Services, Shade said.

"In addition... tribes are eligible to receive certain 'contract support cost' reimbursements for costs the tribe incurs while administering the program but which the secretary either does not incur in administration of the program or that the secretary does incur in administration of the program but pays from sources other than the 'Secretarial Amount," Shade said.

ISDEAA also requires any revenue generated from the administration of contracted or compacted programs must be reinvested into the program and expended in furtherance of the contract or compact, Shade said.

Shade said IHS was designated as "payor of last resort," meaning when a patient has Medicare, Medicaid, or other insurance, the tribe must attempt to recover the cost of services from one of those sources.

The ruling was in favor of the San Carlos Apache Tribe, which administers a health program on behalf of the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and the tribe does third-party billing, and reinvests the funds into further delivery of services under the contract, Shade said.

"But IHS denied reimbursement for contract support costs arising from the tribe's expenditure of third-party funds, even though the tribe expended those funds in a manner identical to how it expended the 'Secretarial Amount' – delivery of health services," Shade said.

In 2023, UKB received \$99,000 in secretarial funding for its behavioral health program contract and just \$16,000 for contract support costs. Through intentional management and highly-efficient operations, third-party revenue from that year and prior years reinvested and expended in 2023 on delivery of services exceeded \$5.2 million for that period, Shade said.

"Dollar for dollar, the full contract support costs could easily reach or exceed \$1 million," Shade said. "Justice [Brett] Kavanaugh's comment that 'the extra federal money... does not come free' is ironic."

The tribal dollars supporting the federal government's short-fall are also not free, Shade said.

"The federal government should pay its bills," Shade said. "The majority on the Supreme Court correctly agreed."

This story comes to Giduwa Cherokee News from Lee Guthrie through her reporting work with the Tahlequah Daily Press.





### UKB 74th Celebration MOTORCYCLE SHOW

All makes, models, foreign, domestic, and year.

Trophies for "Best Street" and "Best of Show".

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Venue At : UKB Celebration Grounds 18300 W Keetoowah Circle Tahlequah, OK 74464 Date & Time :

October 5th, 2024 @ 8:00 a.m. For More Information Call (918) 797-0730

Elaina Belmonte

**Registration Fee \$10** 

# 74th Annual Keetoowah Celebration Guardians of the Culture DSIG Che TGOSAPLOJ

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