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Official Statement Below

GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

YSG GWY AWP Official News Publication of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma December 2024

CNO passes resolution to withdraw from Cherokee Tri-council

An approved CNO resolution states that in practice, the Tri-Council no longer achieves its "legitimate objectives," but "serves as a forum for the UKB to attack the sovereignty of [the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma]" and "falsely claim rights under Cherokee treaties."

By: Troy Littledeer | @troylittledeer

TAHLEQUAH, OKLA., — The Council of the Cherokee Nation unanimously approved a resolution at the Dec. 16, 2024, legislative body's monthly meeting formally withdrawing from the annual Cherokee Tri-Council meeting which included the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians based in Cherokee, North Carolina and the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

"It's unfortunate that the Council of the Cherokee Nation has decided to withdraw from the Tri-Council. In their explanation, they made it clear that they refuse to discuss the difficult issues we face between our tribes," UKB Assistant Chief and Chief-elect Jeff Wacoche said. "As elected leaders of our respective tribes, we have been entrusted with defending the best interests of the Cherokee people, whether they are citizens of the Cherokee Nation or members of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees or EBCI. It's sad to see that they refuse to cooperate with us for the best interest of the Cherokee people, instead choosing to sign cooperative agreements with non-native entities and relinquish sovereign rights as a federally recognized tribe."



UKB Chief Joe Bunch and EBCI Chief Michell Hicks at the 2024 Tri-council hosted by CNO (Photo by Lani Hansen).

The annual Tri-Council meetings allowed the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma to communicate, cooperate, support, and learn from each tribe's experience dealing with current pressing issues. Tri-Council has brought the tribes together for nearly 10 years, since 2012. There was two years they didn't meet, because of the pandemic. Another purpose of the tri-council meeting is to show unity and support in sovereignty and Native American causes across the board.

See TRI-COUNCIL, Page 2

STATEMENT FROM THE UNITED KEETOOWAH BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS



Wednesday, December 18, 2024
By Staff Reports; Press Release

TAHLEQUAH, OKLA., – The UKB is thrilled to finally have IHS funding for a purchase and referred care program (PRC) program for our members. The benefits of the UKB Health System are numerous and obvious to anyone who is being honest about the conditions in the region: expanded access to care, improved quality of services, increased overall health funding in the region and the creation of dozens of meaningful employment opportunities. This funding is a great benefit to the whole of the

Oklahoma Cherokee Reservation, benefiting all tribal members, not just members of the UKB.

There is a need for the UKB to expand access to care for our people. Our tribal members want to receive their health care in a UKB health care facility for they are routinely denied access to care by the CNO. Healthcare is predicated on trust, and we must ensure our members trust their providers and have trust in the process.

Our UKB members must know that their care is not disrupted by this 'announcement.'

- United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians

Chief Joe Bunch reflects on representing the tribe

By LANI HANSEN, Senior Reporter

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- As the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma will see a new face for Chief in the upcoming year, Chief Joe Bunch reflects on his term serving the tribe.

Bunch has served as the 11th UKB Tribal Chief for ten years. He has always had this dream of what it would be like to oversee five to ten thousand people. When he came into term as Chief the number, he expected was not it, as there are more than 14,000 enrolled tribal members.

Throughout his term, Bunch was able to bring

the unity of the tribal council back. He helped in getting their voices heard, including tribal members. The Land in Trust was a major monumental accomplishment, which Chief assisted in getting. Another accomplishment in Chief's term was receiving Indian Health Services Purchased and Referred Care Program for exclusive UKB members.

"This program with IHS is a David and Goliath story," Chief commented.

Chief Bunch also assisted in starting a Food Distribution Program, which he stated the tribe always wanted and needed.

"We are not there yet but working on it in

regard to the Local Food Purchase Program," Chief said.

As the end of his term is nearing, Chief Bunch will miss working for the people, tribal members as well as the elected officials and council.

"The people are what make our tribe, and we certainly have good ones," Chief stated.

Before his days as Chief come to an end Bunch wants to thank the tribal members for allowing him to represent the tribe for the last ten years.

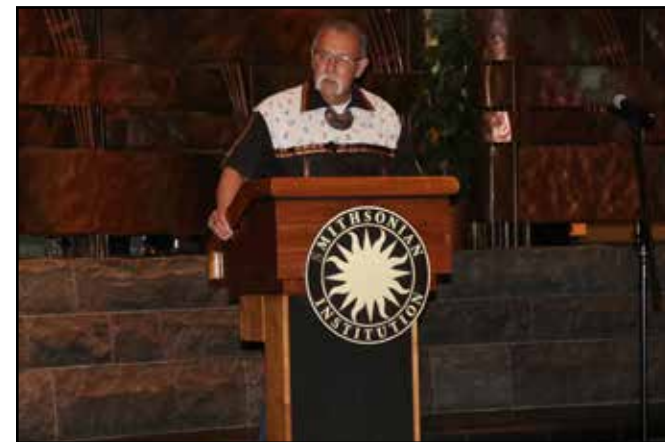
"Pray for our tribe, leaders, our nation, all of us," Chief stated. "Until we see each other again."



UKB Chief Joe Bunch at the National Museum of American Indian. Photo by Smithsonian Museum



The 2023-2025 UKB Tribal District representatives and the four officers at the 2023 inauguration. Photo by Lani Hansen



Chief Bunch presented at the 2023 Cherokee Days in Washington, D.C. Photo by Lani Hansen



Four UKB Tribal District reps and Chief attended the 2023 Cherokee Days. Photo by Lani Hansen



Chief Joe Bunch, UKB Congressional Delegate Tori Holland and UKB Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche together in Washington, D.C. (File Photo)



Brittany Cheater, IHS Oklahoma City Regional Director-Rear Admiral Travis Watts, UKB Treasurer Sonya Gour, UKB Chief Joe Bunch, IHS Director Roselyn Tso, Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche, Kathy Stafford, UKB Secretary Joyce Hawk, UKB Advisor Brian Shade, UKB Coporate Board Woody Anderson, Melissa Combs, UKB Advisor Martha Ketcher. Photo by Troy Littledeer



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By: UKB Chief Joe Bunch
December 2024

Si yo,

I hope all is well and everyone had a wonderful Christmas, My final Newsletter, this administration has seen record support from the federal government due to covid epidemic, and we are still recovering from the virus fall out. We learned new ways of distributing service to our tribal members through curb side services. No employee was sent home, some worked from home, we didn't have a break in service to the tribal members. We received record breaking funds from the federal government. For the first time we have contact with secretary of interior office through the Assistant Secretary Bryan Newland, and Secretary Roslyn Tso IHS. Our channels to our Oklahoma elected officials have opened up and are in good standing. President Biden nominated Deb Highland as secretary and Bryan Newland as assistant Secretary and the selection of Roslyn Tso Secretary of Indian Health Indian country scored big with their implementations

When I first came to office we had to upgrade our computer systems, our systems were antique, we overcame that and have never looked back. We began reintroducing ourselves to the Oklahoma Delegation, locally and in DC, we warded off two attempts of rider bill that would give no ability to veto any land transaction or any gaining or implementation of program funds or programs. We built and purchased three apartment coosa wati, going snake and the upcoming veterans and elder park project. We expanded with storm shelter Henry Doublehead child care



Chief's Corner

JOE BUNCH
Principal Chief
jbunch@ukb-nsn.gov

center, we relocated our court to the wellness center, we began holding our monthly council meetings in the newly named UKB Justice building. We built Housing warehouse, reroofed the administration and title VI program building we built a new maintenance building. With arrival of pandemic money we purchased equipment and personal safety devices, to manufacture cleaning detergent that is 100 more powerful than bleach to combat the spread of the virus in addition to facial masks, we continued our services through curb side service, our elderly food program shut its doors and continued service through curb side pick up. For economic development we purchased rental property in downtown Tahlequah and stilwell, we initiated 106 L lease programs space for much of our federally funded service programs. We build a new 70 child day care service in stilwell, we purchased Oklahoma Station on lake tenkiller, recently, we purchased diamond head floats on the Illionis river. We built new court building and ICW Building. We assisted tribal members with general assistance 8, 500.00 and provided additional program services dollars, our major accomplishments was our 76 acres land in trust, we have attained IHS purchased and referred care program funding, we have Local Food Purchase Program which jumpstarts food production from the local and disadvantaged farmers. We have had visits from the Assistant Sec-

retary of Interior, Brian Newland, the secretary of IHS Roslyand Tso senators Lankford office and Senator Mullin Office. We are in progress of building a new tag office, council chamber and putting the finished touch of a Smoke shop. WE purchase 200 acres behind the Echota RV park and we have purchased the old Marlyn Optical, built Little Kansas community, purchased a building in Stilwell to provide Echota Behavioral Health service. We have upgraded our aging fleet of service vehicles and we will look at upgrading our computers. We have served and welcomed the tri council meeting at least three times during my administration. We have developed and implemented our Keetoowah Cherokee Language revitalization program we look forward to the graduates and continuing our language. Educationally we have assisted at least 200 young people per year with vocational and educational training and assistance.

Above the accomplishment mentioned above, the federal government through government to government counselation are respecting and acknowledging our sovereignty and identity as a federally recognized tribe of Indians.

More importantly, we need to rally behind our newly elected officials and continue our support and prayer for them, our tribe and our nation to succeed.

It has been my honor and privilege to server and work as the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians Chief, I look forward to visiting with you, until we see each other again, do da go hv i

Chief Joe Bunch

Riley Aimerson Honorable Mention at JOM Art Show

The Johnson O'Malley funded art show reception on December 17, featured local schools with Native American students. The program recognized several Native students that practice and excel in cultural arts and crafts. One of these students was Riley Aimerson, a 12-year-old student at Cherokee Immersion School. Riley is a member of the United Keetoowah Band, who practices in several crafts. This year at the JOM show, she created a turtle basket, utilizing skills she learned from her grandma, Suzie Dick. The basket was created with designs passed from Suzie and won First place in the 5-6 Grade Division and Honor-

able Mention of all the entries. Riley plans to continue creating cultural art, and has sold items to the John Hair Cultural Center. Congratulations Riley!



TRI-COUNCIL

The United Keetoowah Band are scheduled to host the 2025 Cherokee Tri-Council.

Statement from Joe Bunch, Chief of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians

From broadband administration and education funding, to sending a Cherokee delegate to Congress, there is opportunity after opportunity to work together for the good of the Cherokee people. And yet, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma refuses to work with the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians to tackle these issues common to both federally recognized Indian tribes living side-by-side in Northeastern Oklahoma. The CNO announcement to withdraw from Tri-Council is another ugly marker on the CNO leadership's misadventure against the United Keetoowah Band people.

To both CNO citizens and UKB members, I beseech you to listen to what our tribes are saying, and gauge for yourselves the sincerity and intentions behind the statements being made by both. Listen to our openness and our honesty, with no hidden agenda and no delusions of dominance over the affairs of our sister Cherokee tribe in Oklahoma. And then listen to the preemptive aggressor, whose noisy and incendiary media apparatus

works to revise our shared history and mislead its people. As UKB tribal leaders, we have implored the CNO to join with us and only get attacked for it by the very vocal and camera-loving CNO principal chief.

Instead, Chuck Hoskin stokes division, politicizes issues that should never be political, and works to the erasure of the United Keetoowah Band and its people's rich history. We know that Chuck Hoskin's actions are no reflection of what is in the hearts of the people of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Our families live, work and worship together, and this conflict could end with the stroke of a pen by the elected officials within the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

We will never apologize for the historical fact that the CNO is not the only federally recognized Cherokee tribe and not the only successor in interest in Oklahoma to the Cherokee Treaties.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians remain aligned in our promise to our people and will continue to collaborate productively to ensure the long-term well-being and prosperity of all Cherokee. Our tribes will continue to collaborate through the Tri-Council and welcome the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma to join us – when CNO officials decide to do what is right and just for the Cherokee people.

“Like the scripture says, ‘for as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function,’” UKB Treasurer Sonja Gourd said. “Tri-council was the one week where we can join our brothers and sisters in the EBCI and CNO to come together, utilizing our individual functions to benefit the one body: our people. I sincerely believe our ancestors would be proud to see how we bonded in fellowship, express our support for each other—like with the Moccasin Bend issue at this year's meeting—and how we displayed what it means to be Ani'-Yun'wiya [principal people].”

Despite the feelings of unity felt by UKB Treasurer and Council officer, Gourd, The Cherokee Phoenix reported on December 20, that Speaker of the Council of the Cherokee Nation, Mike Shambaugh stated that Tri-Council has become “a platform for attack against” the Cherokee Nation, its sovereignty and even its name, often cited as “Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma” by the UKB.

Wacoche has stated Cherokee sovereignty should unify instead of splitting. “There are few people that remain who know how or why this feud began, but I know where it can end: with us acting like true leaders, sitting down together, and working for the best interest of the Cherokee people moving forward. That's true Cherokee sovereignty,” Wacoche said.

Keetoowah Museum Employees Show Appreciation for Lighthouse Employees



Museum employees with two Keetoowah Lighthouse members and their gift bags. Lighthouse director, Charlie Dreadfulwater, security officer Trent Frailey, assistant museum director Barbara Girty Foster, and museum employees Kyndal Aimeron and Rae-lie Grayson. (not pictured are museum employees Ernestine Berry and Marilyn Craig

Keetoowah Lighthouse were given appreciation gift bags for Christmas by the John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum staff. The gift bags contained a personalized ornament, Keetoowah coffee cup, homemade candy, Chex mix, a Starbucks gift card and museum giveaway items.

The handmade card read, "Keetoowah Lighthouse, you are each worthy of our deepest respect and we appreciate what you do for our community. We are so thankful for your service and wish you and your families the very best holiday season. From all of us at the John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Muse-

um. "With the recent attacks on our Lighthouse from CNO, we wanted to let them know how much we appreciate them," said Barbara Girty Foster. "We sometimes host other departments in appreciation for their work and this time we wanted to recognize Lighthouse," she added.



Oaks Mission Schools receives early Christmas gifts

Two weeks before Christmas break, the Native American Missions and Evangelism team brings "shoe box" ministry to the school.

LANI HANSEN, Senior Reporter

OAKS, Okla- Christmastime is upon us, and Oaks Mission School was in for a big surprise when the students received Christmas "Shoe Boxes" filled with gifts, from the Native American Missions and Evangelism (N.A.M.E.).

Oaks Mission School has a long history of educating Native American children, which is why 85% of the student population are Native American with many of those being UKB tribal members. Oaks is a school providing education starting from three-years-old to twelfth grade, with 150 students.

The "Shoe Box" ministry within the N.A.M.E. organization goes back 25 years ago, taking little things like hats, gloves and coats to the Sioux tribes in North Dakota/South Dakota. They also have taken this ministry to New Mexico.

"This year was the first we have branched out to the children at Oaks Mission," N.A.M.E. representative and Oaks School Board member Keith Marler said. "Which I do appreciate those who put the shoe boxes together."

Marler, who is an Oaks Mission graduate and Pastor of Country Baptist Church in Rose, OK said it had been laid on his heart to bring the ministry to the school. Two weeks before school let out for Christmas break, Marler and a group from his



Keith Marler speaks on behalf of N.A.M.E. with students at Oaks Mission Schools. Photo by Lani Hansen



Members of Country Baptist Church help hand out the "Shoe Box" gifts to students. Photo by Lani Hansen

church handed these gifts out to the students.

"Seeing the kids get shoe boxes were perfect for what we needed at the time, so we appreciate that," Oaks Elementary School Principal Holly Davis commented.

N.A.M.E. is a mission group made up of individuals from different churches, ranging from Arkansas, Mississippi and Oklahoma.

Elders' Circle

Welcome to the new Keetoowah Elders' Circle! This is a designated space for sharing information about the wisdom, knowledge, and experiences of our tribal elders. Please send us your elder family member highlights. We can recognize elder members' birthdays, anniversaries, share funny family stories about the old days and favorite recipes, post family reunion announcements or new additions to the family. Send Elder stories and announcements to: media@ukb-nsn.gov.

Other Elder News:

Next Elder Committee Meeting will be held at UKB Title VI-Jim Proctor Elder Nutrition Center Tahlequah, OK
January 13 | 12:00 PM
Everyone Welcome!

Remembering an old time Christmas as a Child

By Lois Fuller

My best childhood memories were living in a 3-room log house with my 5 sisters and 5 brothers in which I was number 10. As it got closer to Christmas time, my older siblings would go to the woods and find a nice Christmas tree. Mom would then trim the tree and put it in a bucket with dirt to hold the tree in. Mom watered the Christmas tree daily. We also had a woodstove. I don't know how the Christmas tree never burned up. The tree decorations were all homemade. The garland was made from popcorn and mom made bells from egg carton and foil. I remember the ladies from a church always coming before Christmas with gently used clothing and toys and small bags of candy. I stood behind mom and watched. I didn't



fully understand what was spoken in English, but they were nice. English was hardly spoken at home.

Mom cooked on a wood burning cookstove which made all the food taste so good. I don't know when we

started having turkey or ham at our Christmas meals. Our Christmas meal consisted of deer meat, fried Chicken, squirrel dumplings, chicken dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans and homemade biscuits. All the food

was home grown except the deer. We also had pumpkin pie, raisin pie, apple pie and dad's favorite, pineapple upside down cake. I loved mom's apple pie because I could carry a slice of pie in my hand, and it wouldn't crumble apart.

We didn't have electricity or running water. We had kerosene lamps for light, the family would go out and cut wood for heating and cooking with while dad would go hunting for squirrels. We had a water well a few feet from house.

Oh, how I would like to go back in time to have another Christmas like this. Now I'm an Elder, 6 of my siblings have passed on to be with our mom and dad. I'm a grandmother now, leaving memories that might someday be told by my grandchildren of my old time Christmas as a child.

Giduwa Cherokee News

P.O. Box 746

Tahlequah, OK 74465

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P.O. Box 746, OK 74465.

Troy Littledeer | Media Director/Editor

Lani Hansen | Reporter/Media Specialist

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Christmas Native Art Show and Sale a Successful Event

“We’d like to say a special, heartfelt thank you to our volunteers, who made the day a great success and were so much help. Their contributions are numerous, and their impact is great,” said museum assistant museum director Barbara Girty Foster.

TAHLEQUAH - The Third Annual John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum’s Christmas Native Art Show and Sale was a multigenerational fun event! Babies, kids, adults of all ages, and moms, dads and grandparents were in attendance. Exhibitors displayed both original paintings and prints, beadwork, jewelry, textiles, woodwork, Christmas ornaments and decorations, cornhusk dolls, baskets, ribbon skirts, pies, breads, cakes, cookies, candy, and jam. Two food vendors set up outside including Patti G’s Tacos and Ga Du, who served corn soup, frybread,

beans, and Rezdogs. Tradition Keepers participating in the event with a booth for their original items included Marcella Foreman, Tanisa Foreman, Lena Deere, Betty Holcomb, Char Wolfe, Sharon Benoit, and Roger Loftis. These folks, along with Tradition Keepers Sammy Still and Ernestine Berry, donated twenty-one items for the TK Raffle, which was held at 4 pm on Saturday. The drawing was live on Tradition Keeper Char Wolfe’s Facebook page. Staff contacted winners by phone, and winners were asked to pick up their items in the next 30 days.

There was a good stream of people throughout the two-day event. Attendees were treated to holiday refreshments including homemade Christmas cookies, chocolate dipped cookies, apple cider and coffee. The room was decorated beautifully with white lights and snowflakes hanging from the ceiling and greenery, bright lights, red bows and a fiberoptic Christmas tree. The Kanuchi making class and demonstrations were popular, and the museum ended up with quite a few Kanuchi balls to put in the freezer for future events. The 2024 Tradition

Keeper, Betty Holcomb, recognized for Domestic Arts, conducted the class. “We’d like to say a special, heartfelt thank you to our volunteers, who made the day a great success and were so much help. Our volunteers and staff worked hard for the past month decorating the museum indoors and out, restocking the gift shop and they also decorated Christmas cookies for a couple of days. Their contributions are numerous, and their impact is great,” said museum assistant museum director Barbara Girty Foster.



2024 Tradition Keeper Roger Loftis sells his paintings, while his sister Faye Loftis sells Kanuchi balls.

Daughters of 2024 Tradition Keeper Betty Holcomb’s daughters, Tonya Hudson and Dondi Atkins, sell baked goods at their mother’s booth. Betty was outside doing Kanuchi making demonstrations.



Betty Holcomb teaches a group how to make Kanuchi.

This toddler had his first taste of Kanuchi.

Yum, give me more Kanuchi, Mom!

This attendee came straight to the Keetoowah Native Art Show from her graduation from Northeastern State University.

Keetoowah Museum Hosts Tahlequah Chamber of Commerce Monthly Mingle

TAHLEQUAH – Over 80 people were in attendance when the John Hair Cultural Center and Keetoowah Museum staff hosted the Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce Monthly Mingle on Friday, December 6. Monthly Mingle is a get-together of chamber members and is always held from 8 to 9 am on the first Friday of the month. A different Chamber member hosts this event every month, and it is a place to network, and to get to know other members or businesses/people

interested in becoming members. On top of networking, the monthly events are highlighted, and newcomers get the chance to introduce themselves and their businesses. Thanks to many hours of hard work from museum volunteers and staff, the museum gallery, gift shop, classroom and hallway were decked out in their Christmas splendor, with a roaring fire on the tv screen as Christmas music played in the background. Guests were served mini frybread

breakfast sandwiches, Kanuchi, pastries, coffee, and juices. “We loved hosting our chamber members and it was a great opportunity to showcase our museum and gift shop,” said assistant museum director Barbara Girty Foster. It was nice for our staff to meet some of the folks that are part of the Chamber, and we enjoyed having them here,” she added.



How do you light up a room? Ask museum staff and volunteers!

Christie Kirk, Kim Hair, Terry Kingfisher, Barbara Girty Foster and Rolanda Aimerson.

Keetoowah employees host the Monthly Mingle. (front row l to r) Ernestine Berry, Marilyn Craig, and Kyndal Aimerson. (back row l to r)

PROTECT YOUR HOME AND WEATHER THE COLD.

We are committed to sharing knowledge and helping you identify risks and remove hazards. Your safety is important to us and prevention is key!

Visit and follow the United Keetoowah Band Housing on Facebook for more tips on:

- Freezing Pipe Safety
- Fireplace Safety
- Space Heater Safety
- Stay safe and keep warm!

Tahlequah Christmas Parade of Trees

Wado to the Tahlequah Christmas Parade of Trees for having us! UKB represented well this evening, Chief Joe Bunch, Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoché, Jr. Miss Keetoowah Grayci Spradlin, Echota Behavioral Health, UKB Henry Lee Doublehead CDC and a few employees!

Photos: Lani Hansen



UKB Tag Agency awaits new facility

The new Tag agency on the tribal complex is expected to be finished between December 2024 and January 2025.



Construction progression of the new UKB Tag Agency. Photo by Lani Hansen

TAHLEQUAH, Okla- The wait is over for the Keetoowah Tag Agency and Tax Commission as the new office building is being constructed, it is expected to be completed between December 2024 and January 2025.

It has been a couple of years ago, since we announced the ground-breaking of this new facility and to see it happening with four walls and a roof, both Joyce Hawk and Sheila Bluebird express their excitement.

Tribal Secretary and Tax Commission Chairman, Joyce Hawk said the space of the current offices was small for them and so in a meeting with the Tax Commission they sent bids out for the construction of a new building. It was one thing after another when they received a bid and found contractors willing to work with what the Tax Commission wanted in the new building.

“As long as I have been on the Tax Commission, this is all I ever wanted for the staff in the tag agency is to have their own building,” Hawk

said. “We are not federally funded; we work off generated revenue. I feel like that it should show that ARPA and our revenue can sustain it and that is how we got our tag office.”

The progression of the new facility began within the last few months of 2024. The new Tag Agency will be drive-thru but also customers will still be able to walk in. This will also include a waiting area, a walk-up window where the tag office staff will conduct business and a restroom. In the back, staff will have a breakroom, a file room, office space and a file room.

Tag Agency Supervisor Sheila Bluebird said, “I have been waiting a long time for this new tag office. I’m excited and can’t wait to move in.”

The UKB Tag Agency houses three employees, Supervisor Sheila Bluebird, Tax Clerk Jamie Studie-Dick and Tag Specialist Sunni Steeley.

Hours of operation are, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Title VI Nutrition Program Christmas

The Title VI Nutrition Program hosted a Christmas dinner for the elders on Tuesday, December 17. The menu included baked ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans, hot roll and apple cobbler, coffee, tea, and milk. Elders also got to select a Christmas gift, which was a hand

knitted beanie. These beanies were donated by two sisters who crochet and donate their work. The name of their company is LENA. “We appreciate the generous donation from these ladies. It was a great gift that our elders loved,” said Rebecca Dreadfulwater, Title



Title VI Nutrition coordinator Rebecca Dreadfulwater, (right) gives a beanie to tribal elder Dorothy Ice.




STILWELL OFFICE HOURS
MONDAY - FRIDAY
MORNING
 8:00 - 11:00 AM
MONDAY - THURSDAY
AFTERNOON
 2:00 - 5:00PM
 ****CLOSED FRIDAY AFTERNOON (AFTER 11:00 OFFICE IS CLOSED)****

STILWELL OFFICE - 918-871-2814
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FRANKIE STILL (FLINT DISTRICT) 918-507-1822
WILLIE CHRISTIE (GOINGSNAKE) 918-822-3803
FOR HUMAN SERVICES CALL 918-871-2800
FOR HOUSING CALL 918-871-2773

TAG
EVERY WEDNESDAY
9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

White House Tribal Nations Summit

By: PRESS RELEASE

Monday, December 9, 2024

The following fact sheet was released by the White House on December 9, 2024.

Today President Biden will host the fourth and final White House Tribal Nations Summit of the Biden-Harris Administration, reaffirming the Administration's historic progress on strengthening the Nation-to-Nation relationships with Tribal Nations and cementing its legacy as one of the most supportive Administrations for Tribes ever.

At the Summit, President Biden will announce a new proclamation establishing the Carlisle Federal Indian Boarding School National Monument in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The new national monument will tell the story of the oppression endured by thousands of Native children and their families at this site and the harmful legacy of the broader Indian boarding school system that the federal government operated or supported across the country for more than 150 years. This action builds on President Biden's historic Presidential apology and the leadership of Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland to establish and lead research and listening sessions with Tribes and Native communities across the country as part of the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative.

Respect for Tribal Nations is a cornerstone of the Biden-Harris Administration's policies for Indian Country – policies that are highlighted at the Summit. In addition to the new national monument designation, the Administration will announce a historic, all-of-government strategy to preserve and revitalize Native languages. The strategy would expand access to immersion language programs in schools, support community-led language education efforts, and promote Native language schools and programs. The Administration will also showcase new initiatives supporting Tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and the federal trust responsibility, while bringing together Tribal leaders and senior administration officials to discuss priorities for Indian Country.

Since taking office, President Biden and Vice President Harris have delivered a record-breaking \$45 billion in investments in Indian Country through the Investing in America agenda, transforming infrastructure, expanding healthcare, advancing education, and addressing systemic and historic injustices. Landmark policies and federal action, such as elevating Tribal consultation, investing in developing co-stewardship agreements, elevating the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge, and implementing government-wide training on Tribal treaty rights and the trust responsibility, have centered Native voices in federal decision-making. From the protection of sacred lands through national monument designations and the conservation of over 45 million acres of lands and waters, to the historic Presidential apology for Federal Indian boarding schools, the Biden-Harris Administration has affirmed its deep respect for Tribes and Native communities.

During the Summit, the Biden-Harris Administration will also release a comprehensive 2024 Progress Report for Tribal Nations, which outlines historic progress the Administration has made over the past year to deliver on the President's commitment to supporting Indian Country, and to address the top concerns of Tribal communities.

New Administration-wide actions include:

Healing from the Federal Indian Boarding School Era

- Designating the Carlisle Federal Indian Boarding School National Monument. By establishing a new national monument at the site of the former Carlisle Federal Indian Industrial School, President Biden is acknowledging the Federal Indian boarding school era, advancing healing, and commemorating the resilience of Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples. For more than 150 years, the Federal Government removed American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian children from their families, Tribes, and homelands – often by



President Joe Biden delivers remarks at the White House Tribal Nations Summit in Washington, D.C., on December 6, 2023. Photo by Adam Schultz / White House

force or coercion – and transported them to institutions that aimed to strip them of their languages, religions, and cultures.

From 1879 to when it ceased operations in 1918, the Carlisle School subjected 7,800 children from more than 140 Indian Tribes (including Alaska Native Villages) to its coercive education program. The school served as a model for the Federal Indian boarding school system, which operated throughout the early 19th through mid-20th centuries and comprised over 400 other federally-supported, off-reservation schools across the United States, as well as hundreds of similar institutions operated by religious organizations. At least 973 Native children died in these schools according to available federal records, and the children who survived often endured physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. At Carlisle, school officials forced children to cut their hair, prohibited them from speaking their Native languages, and subjected them to harsh labor.

The new national monument will be located in Carlisle, Pennsylvania on 24.5 acres of what is now the U.S. Army's Carlisle Barracks, one of the nation's oldest military installations. The monument boundary encompasses the historic buildings and structures that made up the campus of the Carlisle School – including School Road Gateposts that were built by the labor of Native American children and youth at the school. The gateposts still stand today as a marker of the removal and separation of children from their families, Tribes, and homelands. The monument will be cooperatively managed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Army. The National Park Service, in coordination with the Army, will engage Tribal Nations and the Native Hawaiian Community in development of the management plan and ongoing management of the monument, and provide for Tribal consultation with any federally recognized Tribe with historical connections to any part of the Federal Indian boarding school system to help ensure the national monument tells the full story of this site, similar institutions, and the broader federal Indian boarding school era.

With the establishment of the new national monument, the Army will now transfer administrative jurisdiction over the gateposts to the National Park Service, and the agencies will sign a memorandum of understanding to guide their cooperative management of the national monument. The Carlisle Federal Indian Boarding School National Monument is President Biden's twelfth use of the Antiquities Act.

Promoting Native Languages

- 10-Year Native Language Revitalization Plan. While there were once hundreds of thriving Native languages in the U.S., over three quarters of the remaining 190 languages spoken today are now endangered. Studies indicate fewer than 20 languages will exist by 2050 if no action is taken. The Departments of the Interior, Education, and Health and Human Services and the White House Council on Native American Affairs are publishing a 10-year National Plan on Native Language Revitalization (Plan) that calls for strategic actions to address the United States government's historic role in the loss of

Native languages across the lower 48 states, Alaska, and Hawai'i. The Plan lays out a long-term, all-of-government strategy that works with Tribal Nations, the Native Hawaiian Community, urban Native communities, Native language experts, schools, community organizations, and the philanthropic sector for the protection, preservation, reclamation and revitalization of Native languages. The Plan's proposals would: 1) expand access to immersion language environments, 2) support community-led revitalization efforts, and 3) develop, grow and sustain Native language support networks. The Plan also recommends ways to address a chronic under-investment in Native language revitalization to date.

Meeting the Federal Trust Responsibility

- OMB Guidance on Unmet Federal Obligations. OMB's guidance furthers the goals of Executive Order 14112, which seeks to reform Federal funding to be more consistent with Tribal self-determination and sovereignty. The new guidance supports a comprehensive effort to address chronic underfunding of Tribal programs by calculating unmet federal obligations and developing actionable recommendations for closing funding gaps.

Promoting Understanding of Tribal Consultation and Tribal Treaty Rights and Reserved Rights

- Trainings for Federal Employees on Tribal Consultation and Tribal Treaty and Reserved Rights. The Department of the Interior, Office of Personnel Management, and the Office of Management and Budget, in coordination with the White House Council on Native American Affairs, are releasing trainings available to Federal employees on Tribal consultation and Tribal Treaty and Reserved Rights. These trainings reflect years of Tribal leader input and will assist federal employees across the government in understanding their role in supporting Tribal consultation and the federal trust responsibility to Tribes.

Reforming Federal Processes for Tribal Nations

- FEMA Tribal Declarations Interim Guidance. New guidance will streamline the process for Tribal Nations seeking disaster declarations, including reducing minimum damage thresholds, enhancing cost-sharing adjustments, and expanding assistance for Tribal members.
- HHS Tribal Data Access Policy. The new policy establishes clear guidelines and timelines for Tribes and Tribal Epidemiology Centers (TECs) to access critical health data, advancing public health outcomes and addressing data disparities.

Supporting Tribes and Other Communities Considering Voluntary Relocation

- Opportunities for Federal Support of Community-Driven Relocation Report. The Community-Driven Relocation Subcommittee of the National Climate Task Force is releasing the Opportunities for Federal Support of Community-Driven Relocation report, which provides background on voluntary community-driven relocation to avoid climate- and pollution-re-

lated hazards, an overview of the current Federal legal and programmatic landscape, and next steps that are available for Federal agencies to support Tribes and other communities contemplating relocation due to severe environmental impact and hazards from climate change. The report recognizes the disproportionate climate-related risks that Tribal communities face and the leadership that Tribal communities have already demonstrated in relocating their communities and partnering with Federal, State, and local governments as well as other partners. An accompanying resource guide will help Tribes and communities identify specific Federal agencies, and programs to support their efforts.

These announcements build upon historic actions by the Biden-Harris Administration to support Tribal Nations and Native communities, which include:

- Historic investments in Tribal Nations, including \$32 billion in the American Rescue Plan, the largest direct federal investment to Tribal Nations in history; \$13 billion in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law; and over \$700 million in the Inflation Reduction Act.

- Signing two Presidential Memoranda directing federal agencies to submit plans of action to implement meaningful consultation with Tribal Nations and establishing uniform standards for Tribal Consultation.

- Historic appointments of Native Americans across the Administration, including Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland and over 80 Native Americans in senior Administration roles.

- Re-launching the Tribal Nations Summit and re-establishing the White House Council on Native American Affairs that serves to foster an all-of-government approach to coordinating and developing Tribal policy.

- Signing an Executive Order to improve public safety and criminal justice and address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP) by directing agencies to prioritize addressing this crisis and assessing what more can be accomplished.

- Signing an Executive Order to improve educational outcomes and career opportunities for Native American students by focusing on systemic barriers, increasing access to high-quality education, and fostering economic empowerment.

- Securing the first-ever advance appropriations for the Indian Health Service, which provides long-overdue funding stability and predictability for IHS.

- Signing a Presidential Memorandum to Restore Healthy and Abundant Native Fish Populations in the Columbia River, which supports cultural and spiritual practices, commerce, and economic growth for Tribes.

- Authoring the first-of-its-kind government-wide Indigenous Knowledge guidance that assists federal agencies in recognizing and including Indigenous Knowledge in Federal research, policy, and decision making.

- Restoring protections for the Grand Staircase-Escalante and Bear Ears National Monuments in Utah and designating and expanding the following national monuments that hold significance to Tribal Nations: Avi Kwa Ame in Nevada; Castner Range in Texas; Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Ancestral Footprints of the Grand Canyon in Arizona; and Berryessa Snow Mountain and San Gabriel Mountains National Monuments in California.

- Increasing Tribal Co-Stewardship of Lands and Waters through historic co-stewardship agreements. During the Biden-Harris Administration, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and Commerce have signed 400 co-stewardship agreements with Tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and consortiums.

United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma Chief Joe Bunch, along with UKB Assistant Chief Jeff Wacoche and UKB Treasurer Sonja Gourd attended the White House's Tribal Nations Summit in Washington on December 9.

A Lumbee Recognition Bill Passes U.S. House Again

By: Cherokee One Feather Asst. Editor

For the third Congress in a row, a House bill that would grant federal recognition to the state-recognized Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina has passed. By a vote of 311-96, the Lumbee Fairness Act (H.R. 1101) passed the U.S. House of Representatives, in the 118th Congress, on Tuesday, Dec. 17, 2024.

The bill was introduced on Feb. 17, 2023 by Rep. David Rouzer (R-N.C.) who said in a statement on Tuesday, “The Lumbee people are an integral part of our southeastern North Carolina community. They are our neighbors and friends. We attend church together. Our children go to school together. But, for generations, the Lumbee Tribe has been denied full federal recognition and tribal sovereignty. Today, I am proud the House of Representatives came together to pass my bill, the Lumbee Fairness Act, and help ensure the Lumbee people have the same rights and benefits as the other federally-recognized tribes across the country.”

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) has opposed Lumbee recognition for years. In a statement on Tuesday night, Ugvwiyuhi (Principal Chief) Mitchell Hicks noted, “The passage of this bill is a serious blow to the integrity of federal tribal recognition. By suspending the rules and eliminating meaningful discussion, Congress has chosen political expediency over the rigorous standards that have long protected tribal sovereignty and identity. If enacted, H.R. 1101 would create a dangerous precedent — one that allows groups to achieve federal recognition without meeting the established requirements for historical, genealogical, and cultural evidence. Every other tribal nation that has sought recognition has had to meet these standards.

For decades, federally recognized tribes have fought to uphold the integrity of this process. The Lumbee group has not met these standards. They cannot identify which historical tribe they descend from, and recent genealogical and historical research has exposed significant flaws in their claims. Federal recognition is not an entitlement. It is a status earned through evidence, not politics.”

Cherokee Nation Ugvwiyuhi Chuck Hoskin Jr. joined Ugvwiyuhi Hicks’ sentiment in a statement. “Today, the U.S. House of Representatives chose stories over evidence and passed the Lumbee Fairness Act. I hope the Senate will again choose evidence over stories and stand up against this latest attempt to circumvent and erode the established federal recognition process.”

Ugvwiyuhi Hicks said other tribes have the same standpoint as the EBCI and the Cherokee Nation. “This is not just an issue for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians — it is an Indian Country issue. If Congress opens the door to recognition without evidence, other groups will follow. Groups with no legitimate claims to tribal identity or sovereignty will attempt to take advantage of this shortcut. The floodgates will open, and the burden will fall on every federally recognized tribe to defend their status, resources, and cultural heritage from encroachment.

The Senate has a choice to

make. They can protect the integrity of federal recognition, or they can pave the way for groups to claim tribal status without evidence. I am calling on the Senate to do what is right. I urge them to reject H.R. 1101 and direct the Lumbee group to seek recognition through the established process at the Office of Federal Acknowledgment. This process exists for a reason — to protect the sovereignty, culture, and legacy of true tribal nations.”

Ugvwiyuhi Hicks added, “The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians stands alongside the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma, the Coalition of Large Tribes, the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s Association, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, and tribal nations across the country in calling for fairness, transparency, and accountability in federal recognition decisions. The Senate must uphold the standards that protect all tribal nations from harm and injustice.”

This issue has been before Congress before. Following are the results of Lumbee recognition bills from the past 10 Congresses alone.

- The Lumbee Recognition Act (H.R. 2758), in the 117th Congress, passed the House by a vote of 357-59 on Nov. 1, 2021.
- The Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina Recognition Act (H.R. 1964), in the 116th Congress, passed the House by a voice vote on Nov. 16, 2020.
- The Lumbee Recognition Act (H.R. 2352), in the 115th Congress, died in the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs.
- The Lumbee Recognition Act (H.R. 184), in the 114th Congress, died in the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs.
- The Lumbee Recognition Act (H.R. 1803), in the 113th Congress, died in the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs.
- The Lumbee Recognition Act (H.R. 27), in the 112th Congress, died in the House Subcommittee on Indian, Insular and Alaska Native Affairs.
- The Lumbee Recognition Act (H.R. 31), in the 111th Congress, passed the House by a vote of 240-179 on June 3, 2009.
- The Lumbee Recognition Act (H.R. 65), in the 110th Congress, passed the House by a vote of 256-128 on June 7, 2007.
- The Lumbee Recognition Act (H.R. 21), in the 109th Congress, died in the House Committee on Resources.
- The Lumbee Recognition Act (S.420), in the 108th Congress, passed the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs on Nov. 24, 2003 but never made it to a vote in the Senate. There was no House companion bill in that Congress. Congressman Chuck Edwards (R-N.C.) spoke of the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives on Sept. 25 in opposition to the Lumbee Recognition Act and in favor of groups going through the OFA process.

“For over 40 years, the Department of the Interior has carried out a merit-based process, as set

out by Congress and administered by the Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA), to make determinations on federal recognition of tribes. If the administration or Congress allows the Lumbee to bypass the OFA, it sends a clear message that other groups with dubious claims for tribal recognition can also avoid the deliberation and scrutiny that the OFA petition is designed to provide.”

His remarks continued, “If there was actual merit behind the Lumbee case for federal recognition, they’d go through the OFA process as set out in the law. But, as they know, it won’t hold up under a deliberative process, they’ve instead sought to get special treatment through other avenues, all in the face of credible opposition by multiple federally recognized tribes.”

The Office of Federal Acknowledgment (OFA) is located within the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs. According to information from the OFA, “By applying anthropological, genealogical, and historical research methods, OFA reviews, verifies, and evaluates groups’ petitions for federal acknowledgment as Indian Tribes.”

As of Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2024, there are nine groups with petitions going through the OFA process including the following: Tuskarora Nation of Moratoc Indians (N.C.), Salinan Tribe of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties (Calif.), Tripanick Nansmond Family Indian Tribe (Kan.), Chihene Nde Nation of New Mexico (N.M.), Fernandeno Tataviam Band of Mission Indians (Calif.), Butte Tribe of Bayou Bourbeaux (La.), Schaghticoke Indian Tribe (Conn.), Muscogee Nation of Florida (Fla.), and the Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe (N.M.).

Cards bearing the logo of the United Indian Nations of Oklahoma (UINO) were distributed during a General Assembly meeting at the 81st Annual National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Convention and Marketplace on Tuesday, Oct. 29 and caused a stir within the organization. The cards rebutted the history and recognition efforts of the state-recognized Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.

The card reads as follows:

“The Dangers of Legislative Recognition for Lumbee

Shifting claims of tribal ancestry

Claims to Native ancestry rely on speculation, not historically or genealogically verifiable information

Lumbee would be the only group to receive recognition without identifying any specific tribe from which they descend.

Lower recognition standards will open doors for false groups and have profound consequences for legitimate tribes’ cultural resources, sacred places, and ancestral remains.”

The card distributed at NCAI contains a QR Code linking to a study on UINO’s website. The study, by Jean M. Kelley, M.A., is entitled “Analysis of Lumbee Historical and Genealogical Claims”.

In the 19-page report, Kelley states, “The totality of Lumbee

claims lacks properly attributed historical documentation and relies on speculative connections rather than verified facts.”

Sen. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.), who introduced the Lumbee Fairness Act (S.521) in the Senate, said in a statement on Tuesday, “I am dedicated to ensuring that Congress fulfills its six-decade-old promise to grant full federal recognition to the Lumbee people. We are now closer than ever to finally fulfilling that promise.”

Sen. Tillis has blocked legislation (S.2088 – Wounded Knee Massacre Memorial and Sacred Site Act) that would place around 40 acres of land on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota into restricted fee status for the Oglala Sioux Tribe and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

Basically, when passed, the bill would guarantee that no commercial development nor gaming could occur at the site of a major atrocity where the U.S. Army killed over 300 (numbers vary on total killed) Lakota men, women, and children on the icy morning of Dec. 29, 1890, at Wounded Knee Creek.

OJ Semans, executive director of C.O.L.T. (Coalition of Large Tribes), wrote a commentary along with his wife, Barb Semans, which appears in Native News Online. They wrote, “As with many other bills that purport to help Indian Country, Tillis blocked it from proceeding, trying to force his colleagues to address his Lumbee recognition bill, circumventing the Department of the Interior’s standard administrative tribal recognition process.

I do not believe Senator Tillis contacted the Lumbee prior to blocking the Wounded Knee legislation, but I would be interested in the Lumbee leadership’s stance on his actions. It is our descendants who are negatively affected by his actions. We believe the Lumbee need to respond in support or opposition to Tillis’s use of their issue – at the expense of another Tribe – to meet his own political agenda. The Lumbee’s silence is tacit support.”

S.521 is currently going through the Senate and is in the Committee on Indian Affairs.

This story comes to Giduwah Cherokee News from Scott McKie B.P. through his reporting work with CHEROKEE ONE FEATHER.

From broadband administration and education funding, to sending a Cherokee delegate to Congress, there is opportunity after opportunity to work together for the good of the Cherokee people. And yet, the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma refuses to work with the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians to tackle these issues common to both federally recognized Indian tribes living side-by-side in Northeastern Oklahoma.

The CNO announcement to withdraw from Tri-Council is another ugly marker on the CNO leadership's misadventure against the United Keetoowah Band people. To both CNO citizens and UKB members, I beseech you to listen to what our tribes are saying, and gauge for yourselves the sincerity and intentions behind the statements being made by both. Listen to our openness and our honesty, with no hidden agenda and no delusions of dominance over the affairs of our sister Cherokee tribe in Oklahoma. And then listen to the preemptive aggressor, whose noisy and incendiary media apparatus works to revise our shared history and mislead its people. As UKB tribal leaders, we have implored the CNO to join with us and only get attacked for it by the very vocal and camera-loving CNO principal chief.

Instead, Chuck Hoskin stokes division, politicizes issues that should never be political, and works to the erasure of the United Keetoowah Band and its people's rich history. We know that Chuck Hoskin's actions are no reflection of what is in the hearts of the people of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Our families live, work and worship together, and this conflict could end with the stroke of a pen by the elected officials within the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma.

We will never apologize for the historical fact that the CNO is not the only federally recognized Cherokee tribe and not the only successor in interest in Oklahoma to the Cherokee Treaties.

The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians remain aligned in our promise to our people and will continue to collaborate productively to ensure the long-term well-being and prosperity of all Cherokee. Our tribes will continue to collaborate through the Tri-Council and welcome the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma to join us - when CNO officials decide to do what is right and just for the Cherokee people.

-UKB Chief Joe Bunch