

MARCH 2025



NATIVE *oklahoma* MAGAZINE



A STORY OF **PASSION, PERSEVERANCE, and PURPOSE** AT OSAGE CASINOS

For over three decades, Amy TallChief has been at the intersection of culture, entertainment, and community. As the Director of Entertainment at Osage Casinos, Amy combines her love for music, rich Osage heritage, and passion for creating experiences that bring people together.

While pursuing her acting career in NYC, Amy TallChief uncovered her passion for shaping events and bringing talent to the stage. Leveraging her experience as both an actress and director, Amy has left her mark on the entertainment industry.

For 13.5 years, Amy thrived leading the entertainment department at Osage Casinos. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020, the entertainment industry came to a halt. As the world resumed, Amy faced the challenge of rebuilding, bringing back concerts and events that revived Osage Casino entertainment.

In her role, Amy handles booking concerts, scouting local talent, and organizing special events while also overseeing the latest logistics and venue upgrades. "Entertainment isn't just a phone call," she says. "It's about figuring out availability, ticket sales, and creating experiences that resonate with our guests."

For Amy, her work goes beyond entertainment—it's about supporting the Osage people and enriching the community. "Entertainment has a way of bringing us all together, giving everyone something to look forward to, and when people visit Osage Casinos, they're supporting the Osage Nation," she explains. "Guests come for the fun, but they stay for the experience."

Under CEO Kimberly Pearson's leadership, Amy has felt more supported than ever. The positive, collaborative environment at Osage Casinos fosters a family-oriented atmosphere, where everyone works together to support the Osage Nation and provide top-tier entertainment. "It's not just about getting things done; it's about doing it together and supporting each other," Amy reflects.



Amy TallChief and Kimberly Pearson, CEO of Osage Casinos

Amy TallChief's journey is a testament to passion, resilience, and purpose. She's shaping the entertainment landscape at Osage Casinos while contributing to the Osage Nation's long-term success. "We are Osage. Our goal is to help our Osage families, and I'm proud to contribute to that," Amy says.

Those interested in a career at Osage Casinos are encouraged to visit the careers page on their website.

**"ENTERTAINMENT ISN'T
JUST A PHONE CALL.
IT'S ABOUT FIGURING
OUT AVAILABILITY,
TICKET SALES, AND
CREATING EXPERIENCES
THAT RESONATE WITH
OUR GUESTS."**

Amy TallChief,
Director of Entertainment



osagecasinos.com

Leading The Way



This Women's History Month, we proudly highlight Mary Jewett's remarkable 34-year journey in the Indian gaming industry. Starting from her humble beginnings as a dealer, she ascended to the role of General Manager of Buffalo Run Casino & Resort, Mary has exemplified dedication, growth, and leadership. Shaped by her experiences in the Midwest and Pacific Northwest, Mary has made a lasting impact on gaming operations and marketing.

With 15 years spent perfecting operations, she mastered the art of delivering an outstanding experience for every guest. As her career evolved, she transitioned into marketing, leveraging her expertise to craft strategies that foster strong relationships with guests and team members. Her passion for continuous learning and leadership has inspired and empowered countless individuals and remains a driving force in shaping a bright future for the casino industry.

This Women's History Month, we celebrate Mary's leadership and her unwavering commitment to fostering a more inclusive and successful industry for future generations.

Mary Jewett
General Manager
Buffalo Run Casino & Resort

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ON THE COVER

By MaryBeth Timothy

Precious Cargo was created by Oklahoma Cherokee artist MaryBeth. The image features an image of an Eastern Band Cherokee woman carrying her child. This image was originally done as a study, taken from an old photograph and done in miniature, freehand with pen & ink on paper. This image has been sublimated onto a decorative ceramic tile, backed with easel and hanging tab.

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All-American Athlete Eyes 2026 Gold

Bailey Golden is one of the newest additions to the USA bobsled team. Photo by Jimmy Reed.



College graduation often signals the end of competitive amateur sports. However, this milestone marked the beginning of a quest for Olympic gold for Bailey Golden. Always a strong athlete, in 2024, Golden began an athletic career in bobsledding, landing a position on the elite USA Bobsled-Skeleton (USABS) team. Setting her sights high, Golden aspires to compete for the United States against other countries and win gold during the 2026 Winter Olympics set to take place in Milan, Italy.

“I want to represent my country on the biggest competitive stage,” Golden said.

As a USABS team member, Golden has returned from competitions in Europe in time for Women’s History Month. Proud of her Chickasaw heritage, she wants to share her tribe’s culture with others from across the world while making history.

As an All-American heptathlete from Oklahoma State University (OSU), Stillwater, Oklahoma, USABS coaches recognized Golden’s explosive power. Upon graduation, Golden was invited to participate on the Bobsled World Cup Team. She is currently in Europe representing the USA in various international competitions.

“Becoming involved with bobsledding occurred very randomly,” Golden said. “After my national meet with track, the head coach – coach (Christopher) Fogt – reached out to me. He thought I might be a good fit for the sport. I was invited to a rookie camp. That set the dominos in motion.”

Rookie camp took place in Lake Placid, New York. Golden would later be asked to attend a development camp, which led to the next step in the process. “I was invited to the Push Championships in September and October,” Golden said. “The championship takes place



***During a training day in Innsbruck, Austria, Bailey Golden tucks under driver Elana Meyers Taylor.
Photo by Viesturs Lacis.***

every year to help determine the national team. We compete to see who has the fastest push time.”

According to Golden, push times at the beginning of the course can determine the difference between winning and losing a bobsledding competition. A fast start time and good driving make all the difference.

“As little as three-tenths of a second at the top of the race can mean as much as a whole second by the time you reach bottom,” Golden said. “Being able to produce that force for a quick start time is important.”

With exceptional push times, Golden earned a place on the USABS team. Golden is currently the “brakeman” for her two-person women’s bobsled team. While striving to give the bobsled the best possible start down the course, she also brakes the sled when the course has come to an end.

“There are similarities between bobsled and track: power, explosiveness, speed and force production,” Golden said. “My track background of being a multi-eventer has laid the foundation for power and explosiveness needed for bobsledding. While transitioning into this sport, I focused more on sprint mechanics and getting quicker – training like a short sprinter.”

As a track and field athlete at OSU, Golden saw major success. She participated in both indoor and outdoor track and field events. As a heptathlete, she took part in the 100-meter hurdles, high jump, shot put, 200-meter race, long jump, javelin throw and 800-meter race. As an indoor

pentathlete, Golden competed in the 60-meter hurdles, high jump, shot put, long jump and 800- meter race.

Golden currently holds three track and field records for OSU. These include scoring the most points combined as a heptathlete and for both individual indoor and outdoor long jumps.

For the 2024 season, Golden was ranked the sixth best collegiate heptathlete in the nation. This has been one of her proudest achievements.

“I decided to pursue track in college because I wanted to dive into this sport and see how good I could become. I wanted to push my boundaries and learn new things. My coach sat me down and we discussed what it would take to reach my goal of becoming an All-American. That is what we worked toward.”

Athletics have always played an important role in Golden’s life. She began playing basketball in first grade. Golden would continue to play basketball throughout high school, later adding track and field sports to her repertoire.

Golden helped lead her hometown high school basketball team to numerous conference and regional championships, including a state title. While attending Choctaw High School, Golden won five state championships, one for basketball and four in track and field events. During her senior year, Golden earned All-State accolades in both basketball and track. She captured

Continued on next page

the record for both the high and long jumps.

“Athletics were a main focus of mine growing up,” Golden said. “I enjoyed the process of what it took to become a next level athlete, the long hours in the gym, sacrifices – lessons learned like time management, handling pressure, adversity, etc. – learning new mechanics, pushing your body past its limits and bonds formed with teammates. It soon becomes an addictive lifestyle, but a good addiction.”

While a track and field athlete at OSU, Golden was asked to play for the OSU women’s basketball team her sophomore year. It was tough competing in both track and field, and basketball at the collegiate level.

“It was intense. I was reestablishing myself with basketball and maintaining a high level of competition within track. There was no time for anything besides school, sports and recovery,” she said. “Understanding goals and priorities were important. ‘Late nights and early mornings’ was the motto that got me through.”

Entering college, Golden’s goal was to be a first team All-American in the heptathlon. However, she didn’t get to start her outdoor track season until her junior year of school because of a redshirt freshman year and the COVID-19 pandemic during her sophomore year.

“I came to OSU solely for track,” Golden said. “The main reason was the coach that recruited me, Josh Langley. He came to OSU not long before. He wanted me to help build his heptathlon program. He was straightforward and laid down a plan to get us both what we wanted. That was a big factor in my decision.”

Among other accolades, Golden has been recognized 12 times as an All-Big 12 Conference honoree and is a three-time All-American athlete.

“Of all my achievements, I value those of my last season the most,” Golden said. “In 2024, I became a first team All-American. First team All-Americans place within the top eight in the country for their event.”

Golden’s accomplishments in sports have not been her only accomplishments at OSU. Golden strives to have as



Bailey Golden earned a spot on the USA Bobsled World Cup Team after a stellar collegiate track and field career. Photo by Jimmy Reed.

much success in academics as she has in sports. She has completed her bachelor’s degree in pre-med biology, with minors in microbiology and psychology. She finished her undergraduate classes with a 3.9 cumulative grade-point average.

Golden is currently in her second year of her master’s degree from OSU in forensic science.

“I have always been interested in how crime scenes work,” Golden said. “I really enjoy scuba diving. I would like to blend the two together. Working for the FBI on their scuba recovery team would be interesting. I am currently writing a 20-page paper on pulling up latent fingerprints from submerged objects.”

As an Academic All-American in 2024, she maintained a cumulative GPA above 3.3 and finished in the top 50 in a NCAA event. From 2019 until 2023, Golden was an Academic All-Big 12 athlete maintaining above a cumulative 3.2 GPA and participating in 20% or more of her team’s scheduled contests.

Golden was granted the 2023 OSU Senior Director Chair Award for maintaining balance in academics, being impactful in her sport and exemplifying what a student athlete should be.

“I have to give credit to my tutors,” Golden said. “It was a lot of odd, late hours. Some nights we would not start until 8:30 or 9 at night. When I was playing both sports, if basketball practice was midday, I would need to have my track practice and weightlifting done before then. I would also need to warm up and recover after practice as well as watch film. It adds up to some late nights.”

In 2022, Golden was presented with the Dr. Gerald Lage Academic Achievement Award. This is the Big 12 Conference's highest academic honor. Golden was also presented with a Citation of Outstanding Achievement from the state of Oklahoma.

"Having success at Oklahoma State, as an Oklahoma native, sparked my interest within the community," Golden said. "Having the ability to show the younger generations that it is possible to come from a smaller town and accomplish big things is empowering.

"I also think it's important to give back to your community. All throughout college I volunteered at the animal shelter, food community center – Our Daily Bread – and the Stillwater Medical Center," Golden said.

As a Chickasaw, Golden is proud of the influence her ancestors have had on the communities within the Chickasaw Nation.

"I receive my Chickasaw heritage from my mother, Jeanna Golden," she said. "To my knowledge, my ancestors, the Norton family, settled in Tishomingo and (the community of) Norton, Oklahoma. Norton was named after my third great-grandmother, Sealy Anderson Norton, who lived

from 1837 to 1917." She is proud of what the Chickasaw Nation accomplishes for its citizens, and proud of her Chickasaw heritage.

"I admire the Chickasaw tribe for their devotion to tribal members," Golden said. "They give back significantly to ensure that their citizens have what they need to succeed, from medical care, education and caring for the elders."

In the past, Golden has been a beneficiary of a variety of the programs and services provided to her by the Chickasaw Nation. She is the recipient of numerous education grants and scholarships. These have included a clothing stipend and laptop to complete her studies. Golden is also pleased with the benefits her grandparents receive from the tribe, such as meals for the holidays, retreat trips and the Chickasaw Nation Senior Center available to them.

"I am the most grateful for the Chickasaw tribe in providing me with an excellent education," Golden said. "Once I have completed my studies, I hope to find a way to give back and show my appreciation. This could be done through various avenues, such as pursuing a career within the tribe or volunteering my time with the skills I have learned."

Osage
CASINO HOTEL

Explore
THE HERITAGE OF THE
OSAGE NATION.

Photo by Cody Hammer, Osage News

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TALLGRASS PRAIRIE PRESERVE

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OSAGE TRAIL

OSAGE NATION MUSEUM

WAZHAZHE CULTURAL CENTER

Photo by Echo Reed, Osage News

OSAGE VETERANS MEMORIAL

FROM HER GRANDMA'S TABLE

How Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation Helped Kelly Price Transform a Family Recipe into a Thriving Business

By Tribal Business News staff



Kelly Price (left), owner of Redbone Indian Tacos, transformed her grandmother's frybread recipe into a thriving business with support from Felicia Freeman (right), loan officer at the Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation, who helped turn a family tradition into a growing Oklahoma enterprise.

Kelly Price learned the art of Native traditions at her grandmother's side in Oklahoma. Growing up in Medicine Park and later Lawton, she was shaped by the deep influence of her elders — her grandmother, a full-blood Kiowa and grandfather, a full-blood Comanche.

Price fondly recalls watching her grandmother craft quilts and shawls and going to powwows as a family. But there is one thing that stands out among the rest of her memories: Grandma's frybread.

"My frybread-making skills came from watching my grandmother with her recipe and how she made it," Price shared. "Being at the table with my grandma, learning her cooking ways, is where it all started."

What began as a cherished family tradition grew into something bigger six years ago, when Price used her grandmother's receipt to help a neighbor in need. During a harsh winter, a family in Medicine Park faced

severe medical hardships, prompting Price to organize a fundraiser during the town's annual Polar Plunge event. Armed with her grandmother's time-tested frybread recipe, Price set up shop selling Indian tacos to raise money for the family.

"I figured, you know, I can do something about this," she recalled. It was an act of kindness that changed her life.

The fundraiser was an overwhelming success. Hungry for more, Price's friends and family encouraged her to turn the family recipe into something more. She and a friend transformed a travel trailer into a food truck and launched Redbone Indian Tacos, and began traveling on the weekends to events around the state, selling fry bread tacos.

Despite the demands of juggling her full-time job in corporate sales with weekend events, the business flourished. As demand grew, Price decided to take a leap

of faith. With no formal business background, she crafted a business plan using online resources and presented it to Felicia Freeman at the Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation (CPCDC), a Native community development financial institution (CDFI).

Freeman immediately recognized Price's marketing prowess and community commitment.

"Kelly sells herself. She's not lazy at all. If she sees something that needs to be done, she goes and does it," Freeman remarked. "That's huge. That's an entrepreneur."

CPCDC's initial loan helped Price establish her business formally, and additional funding followed — including crucial support during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The support allowed Price to expand her operations, introducing a pizza trailer featuring frybread pizzas and planning a brick-and-mortar location in Lawton. "I couldn't have done it without them," Price said. "Felicia believed in me, and that's why I continue to grow."

The frybread venture's success stems from CPCDC's support and a community that championed Price from day one. The business has truly become family-oriented, with her son working alongside her Redbone Indian Tacos. "It's like a little family-owned business that I run with him," Price noted. "I wanted to do more for the community, and this is how."

As she prepares to open its first permanent location, Price continues to honor her grandmother's legacy—one frybread taco at a time—while inspiring others to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams. CPCDC's Freeman hopes Price's story inspires other Native entrepreneurs.

"Reach out to a Native CDFI close to you," Freeman advised. "There's lots of technical assistance, lots of partners, and lots of ability to get the help you need. Dreams are endless, endless possibilities. Always chase your dreams. Never say no, and don't ever give up at the first no."

Difference Makers 2.0 is a new yearlong series that highlights how Native community development financial institutions (CDFIs) work alongside their small business clients to accelerate change and create economic opportunities in Native communities. Join the Native CDFI Network and Tribal Business News as they shine a spotlight on the people accelerating economic change in Indian Country. Read the stories here and be sure to tune into the Difference Makers 2.0 podcast.

Aconav

CULTURALLY FUELED FASHION FROM ACOMA POTTERY ART

The Pueblo of Acoma is home to designer Loren Aragon. It is one of 19 thriving Pueblo communities, located in New Mexico, and is considered to be one of the oldest continually inhabited civilizations in North America. The deep rooted history and rich cultural heritage of the Acoma people is the fueling factor for Aragon and has become the foundation for ACONAV designs.



"The Creakin' Creek Survives a Flood"



SOUR SOFKEE #62

Written By: Fus Yvhikv



"Heyluh! It's colder than my ex-wife's divorce attorney," Fixico complains.

"Mvtawvte! Doesn't get colder than that," I say.

"Good thing I bought this fluffer vest," Tarpalechee says.

"Puffer! You mean PUFFER vest," I say as Yahola snickers.

"Cvhiwv didn't just take one-half of my 401(k), she got 100%!" Fixico continues to lament.

"You mean she got all \$100?" Tarpalechee asks.

The Creek Frybread boys hoot and holler.

"She's not cehiwv anymore," Yahola says.

"Things could be worse," I say. "You could still be married to her."

"Oh God!" Fixico cries. "Just thinking of it makes me want to order one of Harjo's rot-gut Old Fashioneds."

"I heard that," Harjo, the rotund bartender and proprietor of the Rez Bar yells. "I ought to cut you off."

"You'd be doing me a big favor," Fixico says. "Your Old Fashioneds are annually voted as the worst in Tulsa."

We all nod our heads in agreement and laugh derisively. Harjo approaches. He wipes his sweaty bald head with a bar towel as he flicks ashes off the stub of his cigar. The strings of his bartender's apron barely wrap around his ample gut and strain to remain tied. He empties the mason jar lids that serve as ashtrays.

"I'm freezing my cvpo off, Harjo," Tarpalechee says. "Turn up the heat!"

"More power Scottie!" Yahola says laughing as he imitates Captain Kirk.

"Aye! I'm givin' her all she's got, Captain," Fixico says. "These space heaters are going blow! She's gonna blow!"

"Beam me up, Scottie!" I say.

"I'm gonna beam your cvpos right out the front door!" Harjo replies as he begins to chew the stub of his cigar furiously.

That's the tell we are hoping for. It is a great joy to get under Harjo's skin. While he's never followed through

on his threats to ban us from the Rez Bar, we can always hope. Tarpalechee decides to make peace.

“Ah, come on, cepan. We’re just messin’ with you. No matter what Tulsans say, we love your Old Fashioneds. Bring us another round.”

Harjo waddles off as he shoots us an icy stare. His artificial knees and hips make a harsh scraping and squeaking sound with each step.

“There’s goes the Creakin’ Creek!” Fixico jokes.

The Frybread boys creak up. I mean, crack up.

“Creakin’ Creek,” Yahola says. “Harjo is the Creek version of the Tin Man.”

As the laughter dies down, I notice Tarpalechee’s nose. It’s doing the bunny twitch. The point of his nose rises and falls with each breath. Tarpalechee’s bunny twitch morphs into Sport Plus mode.

“Tarp!” I say. “What’s going on?”

Tarp doesn’t reply. Instead, he shifts his gaze upwards and scans the ceiling. He has to crane his neck to see past the huge brim of his Billy Jack hat.

“I smell something,” Tarp says as his nose makes rapid sniffing sounds.

“Maybe it’s the Creakin’ Creek’s cvpo?” I reply. “He can leave a stank that lingers longer than a Walgreens receipt.”

Tarp doesn’t reply. His eyes are fixated on a cross-section of exposed water pipes just below the ceiling and about 16 feet high above us. Me, Fixico, and Yahola all follow Tarp’s gaze as we all stare at the cross-section of exposed pipes.

“It’s the pipes,” Tarp says. “I can smell the rust. Something’s wrong. I think the pipes are frozen.”

The water pipes vibrate intermittently. The vibrations become continuous and accelerate rapidly into gyrations. The pipes are now forcefully banging into each other in a rezzzy version of twerking. The sound of iron on iron is deafening. Great bulges appear in the pipes which cause them to resemble a python that has swallowed a pig. All the patrons in the Rez Bar are fixated on the threatening sight.

“She’s gonna blow!” Fixico screams.

Yahola’s face is whiter than Crisco shortening. He makes the sign of the cross as he is mesmerized by the twerking pipes. Tarp clutches his pearls. I down my rot gut Rez Bar

Old Fashioned in one swig as I knock on wood. A black cat silently ambles by.

“She’s gonna blow!” Fixico screams again. “Thar she blows!”

There are a series of loud explosions as the pipes burst sequentially. A tsunami of cold water cascades down from the ceiling as the Rez Bar patrons dive under tables, scramble under the bar, and crawl for the doorways. The sheets of water reduce visibility to about ten feet. The entire Rez Bar is instantly covered in three feet of water.

Fixico half crawls and half stumbles toward the cukuce. Tarpalechee floats by in a large plastic tote. He is using a toilet plunger as a makeshift paddle.

“Tarp! Get your cvpo over there in the corner and turn off this water,” Fixico says pointing with his lips.

“Aye, captain,” Tarpalechee replies as he plunges furiously toward the corner.

Tarpalechee spies a small iron wheel attached to a vertical pipe. He grabs the wheel firmly with both hands and attempts to turn the wheel. It doesn’t move. He tries again with all his might. The wheel doesn’t budge.

“Lefty tighty, righty loosey,” Tarp says to himself.

“Tarp you idiot!” I yell. “You’re turning it the wrong way!”

“Oh yeah!” Tarpalechee says. “Now I remember. Righty tighty, lefty loosey!”

The immense water pressure causes the decrepit wooden double doors of the Rez Bar to burst open. It creates a powerful water flume that sucks the flotsam and jetsam contents of the bar toward the front door. The Frybread Boys, Harjo, and the bar patrons are forcefully belched out of the bar and spit into the middle of the street. There is a motley assortment of bodies, tables, chairs, clothing, glassware, beer cans, and vintage space heaters strewn about the street.

Harjo struggles to his feet. He stands staring at the remains of the Rez Bar. He wipes away a tear.

“Look at the bright side cepan,” I say. “This is the cleanest the Rez Bar has been since the Macarena dance craze. It’s freezing out here. Let’s grab a space heater and head back inside.”

Harjo and the Frybread Boys head back to the bar determined to rebuild. Right after a few Old Fashioneds. – Okis ci, Fus.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 4, 2025

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A Record 200 Teams Comprised of Native Youth Are Set to Compete at the Native American Basketball Invitational (NABI) this July

The NABI Founder's Golf Classic in April supports the tournament's scholarship programs

PHOENIX – The Native American Basketball Invitational (NABI), presented by Resolution Copper, returns to Phoenix July 22-26, 2025, with a record 200 teams made up of boys and girls ages 14 to 19, representing Tribal communities from across North America. NABI is the largest all-Native American high school youth basketball tournament and includes a weeklong educational youth summit.

Registration is also open for the [NABI Founders Golf Classic](#) which will be held Monday, April 7, 2025 at Whirlwind Golf Club at Wild Horse Pass. The golf classic supports NABI's college scholarship program,

"Since 2003, we have awarded more than \$500,000 in college scholarships to NABI athletes," said GinaMaria Scarpa, NABI CEO and co-founder. "Our youth and communities love basketball, and NABI uses it as a tool to inspire higher education goals."

For NABI, basketball is way to engage and unite Native and Indigenous youth and inspire them to use their talents to pursue higher education. A record 200 teams will play more than 500 games in 16 gyms in the Valley, and NABI expects sell-out crowds once again this year. For the city of Phoenix, the economic impact of the tournament is estimated at \$3 million.

The semifinal and championship games will be played at PHX Arena, home of the Phoenix Suns and Phoenix Mercury. The championship games will be broadcast live on AZFamily Sports.

In addition to the excitement of the tournament, student athletes also participate in educational components like the NABI College & Career Fair and NABI Educational Youth Summit powered by Phoenix College, as well as being eligible to apply for the NABI College Scholarship fund.

To learn more about NABI, please visit www.nabination.com.

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918-287-5555

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918-540-1536

OTOE-MISSOURIA TRIBE

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Pawnee, OK
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918-540-2535

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Ponca City, OK
580-762-8104

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918-542-1853

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920883 S. Hwy 99, Stroud, OK
918-968-3526

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918-542-2441

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918-560-6198.

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PO Box 746, Tahlequah, OK
918-431-1818

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64700 E. Highway 60,
Wyandotte, OK
918-678-2297

The Chickasaw Nation works to enhance monarch butterfly population



SULPHUR, Okla. – At the Chickasaw Nation, collaborations come in many shapes and sizes.

One of these collaborations is the planted butterfly gardens in and around the Chickasaw Nation.

Thousands have become familiar with the Chickasaw Nation Butterfly Garden located at the Chickasaw Cultural Center in Sulphur. The garden is a butterfly-friendly habitat filled with the endangered monarch butterfly's favorite foods, especially milkweed. Large butterfly statues and educational panels highlight the plight and restoration efforts of destroyed habitats.

In efforts to increase habitat and natural foods available to butterflies during their annual migration from Mexico to Canada, the Chickasaw Nation has harvested hundreds of thousands of native butterfly friendly seeds. While keeping several for its own seed bank, the Chickasaw Cultural Center grows thousands of seeds to be distributed to Chickasaw citizens and organizations willing to plant them.

The hatulhpushik (butterfly) is meaningful within Chickasaw culture. Butterflies represent perseverance and the ability to adapt and change. Butterflies also serve as the symbol of the annual Dynamic Women of the Chickasaw Nation Conference.

Since 2015, the Chickasaw Nation has worked with numerous First American tribes to establish butterfly friendly habitats throughout Oklahoma. This effort increases the availability of food critical to monarch butterfly survival.

While the Chickasaw Cultural Center hosts the crown jewel of a network of gardens sponsored by the Chickasaw Nation and other First American tribes, there are many gardens maintained by the Chickasaw Nation. These include sites at the Chickasaw White House, Boggy Depot Park, WinStar golf course and Chickasaw Nation Headquarters.

In addition to plants being made available to Chickasaw citizens and other First Americans, the Chickasaw Nation distributes seeds and plants to individuals and community nonprofits at no charge. The nonprofit organizations include museums in Wynnewood, Lawton and Seminole, along with a beautification endeavor near the Sugg Clinic in Ada.

The Wynnewood Historical Society's garden – located at the historic Eskridge Hotel Museum – is designed to help all butterflies that call southern Oklahoma home.

Former Education Supervisor at the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation Luann Waters, has worked with and represented the Wynnewood Historical Society for more than 20 years.

She first became aware of the Chickasaw Nation's aim to protect and increase food for monarch butterflies while attending a butterfly seminar at the Chickasaw Cultural Center.

"I explained the historical society was considering a butterfly garden. I asked if they would come over and look at the site," Waters said. "Thalia Miller made a trip to see the site. She asked if we'd like plants from the Chickasaw Nation. The plants were brought over and planted by Thalia and Rhonda Sellers.

"When they came out, they brought enough plants to fill the flower beds along our fence line.

They put them in the ground, and then I took it over," Waters said. "It was like a godsend. I knew they knew their plants and all the help received was appreciated."

The Wynnewood Historical Society began its butterfly garden more than five years ago. The garden is now certified as a "Monarch Waystation" by Monarch Watch,

and it is certified as a wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation.

"The help did not stop after the initial visit. Representatives from the Chickasaw Nation would later come back and provide additional help and recommendations to keep the plants alive and well," Waters said.

As a waystation and habitat site, the garden "provides food, water, shelter as monarchs migrate through North America." The garden supports other butterflies and provides a habitat for them to raise their young as well.

"This garden gives monarch butterflies a chance to stop en route as they migrate back and forth from Canada to Mexico," Waters said. "To receive certification, you must fill out an application and explain the habitat you have. It feels like a badge of honor for us to have these certifications — to have this location recognized."

According to Waters, butterfly gardens do not have to take up large spaces or take a lot of time to maintain. As little as 6 feet of space planted with the right flora will attract butterflies. As native plants to Oklahoma, an hour or less a week is needed to maintain these gardens.

Continued on next page

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While plants from the milkweed family make up most of the vegetation in the Wynnewood Historical Society's butterfly garden, they also have tickseed, ironweed and butterfly weed, among others. Waters indicated that while monarchs are a major concern for the garden, they plant to provide habitats for all butterflies.

"Tickseed will bring in all different sorts of butterflies," Waters said. "Bumblebees just love it. Hummingbirds also come to the tickseed. It's not just a one species kind of plant."

From 2015 to 2017, the Chickasaw Nation collaborated with six First American tribes to establish 50,000 milkweed plants throughout Oklahoma to increase the availability of the food critical to monarch butterfly survival. The Tribal Alliance of Pollinators includes the Chickasaw, Muscogee (Creek), Seminole, Eastern Shawnee, Osage, Miami and Citizen Potawatomi. The Chickasaw Nation continues this partnership and plants milkweed throughout its reservation.

Celebrating the power of pollinators

The Chickasaw Cultural Center, 867 Cooper Memorial Road, is set to host a National Learn about Butterflies Day event March 14.

Guests will have the opportunity to explore a butterfly tent, receive caterpillars and participate in other butterfly themed activities. These will include a pollinator board activity, plant giveaways and make and take activities.

Butterfly cookies will be available at the Aaimpa' Café and butterfly themed items will be available for purchase.

The Anoli' Theater will also show a butterfly themed movie. The Chickasaw Cultural Center is open Tuesday Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and is closed Sunday and Monday.

For more information, contact the Chickasaw Cultural Center at (580) 622-7130 or visit ChickasawCulturalCenter.com.

NEW HIGHLIGHTS TO THE LIMITED EDITION SERIES



Introducing the Manta Series crossbody and beauty bag. Two styles with a unique highlight representing the cultural attire of the Acoma Pueblo.

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Manta Resilience Crossbody: Cotton twill & canvas shell with black on gray Acoma Pottery print representing signature pottery patterns by designer Loren Aragon. Bag measures 8" X 8" X 2.5", with gunmetal hardware, dual internal pockets, quick access back-side pocket, water repellant black nylon lining, and adjustable/detachable, 55" strap.

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1.800.760.6700, cherokee.golf@cnent.com,
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REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Now Open Until May 1st

The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) announces its seventh year of grantmaking. Starting on March 1, 2025, and closing on May 1, 2025, the fund will open a pool of \$10 million.

“Tribal sovereignty, food sovereignty, and economic development are deeply interconnected for Indigenous and rural communities. As sovereign nations with inherent rights to self-governance, Tribal Nations have the authority to shape their food systems in a way that supports local and regional economies and maintains cultural connections to food and land,” says NAAF CEO Toni Stanger-McLaughlin. “The Native American Agriculture Fund (NAAF) supports these efforts by investing in Tribal agriculture and grant projects that directly impact Native farmers and ranchers working daily to strengthen economies and feed our communities. NAAF grant funding is open to all eligible entities that support Native agriculture -- the Request for Applications is open from March 1 through May 1, and we encourage all eligible entities to apply.”

Per Trust Agreement Section 8, eligible grant recipients are:

- 501(c)(3) organizations and nonprofit organizations with a Fiscal Sponsor
- Educational organizations
- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs) and Native CDFIs
- Tribal governments (state and federally recognized) and their instrumentalities

NAAF will also host a series of webinars to support the grant application process on the following four (4) dates. The webinars will provide an overview of the application process and then transition to a question-and-answer period. All webinar recordings will be posted and archived on the NAAF website. The dates for each webinar are found below, and registration is required to participate. The webinars will offer technical assistance to applicants and provide clarification concerning applicant eligibility or focus areas for applications during this grant cycle.

Register Below

Webinars

Thursday, March 20, 2025, at 2 pm - 4 pm Central
Thursday, March 27, 2025, at 2 pm - 4 pm Central
Thursday, April 3, 2025, at 2 pm - 4 pm Central
Thursday, April 10, 2025, at 2 pm - 4 pm Central



FELLOWSHIP OF
CHRISTIAN
ATHLETES

Q AND A

WITH SIMMON HARJO

Tribal Affiliation: Thlopthlocco, Muscogee, and Choctaw

Favorite Bible Verse: “Precious in the sight of the Lord Is the death of His saints.” — Psalms 116:15. I look forward to the day God calls me home and welcomes me to Heaven.

Nickname: Mafo, means grandfather in Choctaw

Favorite food: Burnt meatloaf. When my mom made meatloaf at church she put it down in the broiler. Sometimes she forgot about it while setting the table. No one liked it but me, so I got more!

Favorite Walk-up Song: Crazy Train, Ozzy Osbourne. This was my granddaughter’s walk up song and she used her bat as her guitar.

Favorite Player: Barry Sanders- he was great to watch run around and through defenders. But he was humble about his talent.

Favorite Part of Being Leader On a Team: I love sharing my on and off the field experiences with these young men as well as listening to theirs.

Who Do You Look Up To: My parents, they are great examples to me and so many more people. They have served the Lord all of my life. They travel all over the state to Gospel singings. My dad, Wayne is the Pastor at

NAME: SIMMON HARJO
COACHING: ASSISTANT FOOTBALL,
HEAD POWERLIFTING, ASSISTANT JH BASEBALL
HIGH SCHOOL COACHING: MORRIS JH AND HS
HIGH SCHOOL: TULSA CENTRAL
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UNIVERSITY
SPORTS PLAYED: FOOTBALL
HOMETOWN: TULSA, OK

Buckeye Creek north of Okemah. They have served there nearly 30 years. I love how people compliment them for serving together for so long.

What Is Your Favorite Part of Being a Christian Coach:

I love sharing devotions with the team. This gives me the opportunity to be available for them to ask questions or pray for them during difficult times.

Who was my favorite Senior High Coach: Lamar Burks.

He was my offensive line coach during high school. He was funny during individual period, but I remember the times he publicly affirmed my talents. I hope to be loved as much as Coach Burks is by his former players.

Favorite part FCA: Personally, I love reading the FCA IMPACT PLAY emails. Coach Robert Daniels has done a great job leading the Morris FCA on Wednesdays. I love how the students show up and support each other. Fields of Faith and See You At The Pole services are great to see them all participate in.

Fellowship of Christian Athletes: this years theme-Glory

“We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.” —2 Corinthians 3:18

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John Morris is currently serving with Oklahoma Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Cherokee, Adair and Delaware Counties and is supported financially by faith partners. If you are interested in more information on FCA or being a faith partner go to this link www.my.fca.org/johnmorris. John can be contacted through email: johnmorris@fca.org or by cell number (785-760-1627).

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Basketball Court
Mural by Edgar Heap
of Birds to be Installed
at Campbell Art Park

Oklahoma Contemporary Announces Neufs for Oklahoma Autumn

Oklahoma City, OK (March 4, 2025) — Oklahoma Contemporary is honored to present Neufs for Oklahoma Autumn, a groundbreaking basketball court installation by renowned artist Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds (Cheyenne and Arapaho Nation). An Opening Celebration for this public art piece, an iteration of Heap of Birds’ ongoing Neuf painting series begun in 1981, will be held at Campbell Art Park on May 10, 2025.

Neufs for Oklahoma Autumn transforms the traditional basketball court into a vibrant canvas, featuring imagery inspired by Oklahoma tribal lands. The court’s design incorporates repeated and layered diagonal shapes of color with jagged edges, reflecting the earthly energy and deep cultural significance of the number four in Cheyenne cosmology. The term “neuf” translates to the ritualistic and cosmological importance of the number four, a recurring theme in Heap of Birds’ work.

Flanking the court, the backboards will showcase elements from Heap of Birds’ Native Hosts series, honoring the Native tribes who have historically inhabited the region

and emphasizing their enduring presence. Additionally, the courts’ “scoreboard” will recreate Heap of Birds’ 1982 work featured in Messages to the Public, an artist project organized by Jane Dickson through the Public Art Fund using the Spectacolor light board in Times Square.

This monumental commission combines two of Heap of Birds’ significant bodies of work for the first time, creating a meaningful connection near the artist’s own tribal reservation lands. Presented in collaboration with the artist, Project Backboard and Common Practice, Neufs for Oklahoma Autumn invites the public to engage with Campbell Art Park in unprecedented ways, serving as a canvas for dialogue, contemplation and storytelling.

This installation is part of the spring 2025 exhibition Hock E Aye Vi Edgar Heap of Birds: HONOR SONG, the landmark retrospective celebrating the artist’s visionary 40-year career.



The Sky-Eagle Collection is more than just a fashion brand. It is a celebration of Native American culture and a testament to the resilience of the human spirit. The brand was founded with Yanti, his wife, muse, premier of the Fashion House, and they named the brand after their daughter. Together, they are building a legacy that honors their heritage and inspires others to follow their dreams.

skyeaglecollection.com





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Cherokee 411 with Cara is an independent, full-service news platform dedicated to covering the stories that matter most to the Cherokee people and Native communities. Led by Cherokee leader Cara Cowan Watts, Cherokee 411 delivers real, relevant, and unfiltered reporting across vlogs, podcasts, a news website, blogs, and social media—curating and producing news that amplifies Native voices.

Our coverage spans Cherokee Nation, United Keetoowah Band, and Eastern Band, as well as broader Native news, governance, policy, and cultural issues. Through, ᏌᏍᏍᏍ

ᏌᏍᏍᏍ-The Cherokee Dispatch podcast, in-depth investigative pieces, and digital storytelling, we provide a space for authentic perspectives and meaningful discussions on the challenges and triumphs of Native communities.

At Cherokee 411 with Cara, we aren't just reporting the news—we are shaping the narrative, preserving our history, and ensuring our voices are heard. Follow us for real stories, deep insights, and trusted, independent journalism.

We Are Cherokee.

Season 8, Episode 1:

Together We're More, With Sara Seals



Season 8 26 February 2025

“To the Choctaw proud, ours is the sovereign nation offering opportunities for growth and prosperi-ty.” This is the stated mission of my tribe, the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.

For the Choctaw, creating opportunities isn’t just about supporting our own people—it’s about up-lifting the surrounding communities as well.

Sara Seals, Director of Marketing at Choctaw Nation, shares the tribe’s mission to capture and share the stories of our tribal members and the impactful work of the ongoing campaign, “Together We’re More.”

I was honored to be featured in this campaign, sharing my passion for preserving Native American stories. One of the key inspirations behind my work is the life and legacy of my great-grandmother, Ella.

In this episode, we dive deeper into the meaning behind “Together We’re More”—a message that ex-tends beyond

the Choctaw Nation. It reflects the power of collaboration between Choctaws and non-Natives alike. This vision comes to life every day through our tribe’s commitment to strengthening communities—investing in infrastructure, roads, education, clean water, and more.

No matter your background—Choctaw, Native, or neither—we can all embrace the idea that togeth-er, we’re stronger. Together, we’re more.

Yakoke, Sara!

See and hear the stories of my fellow Choctaws at www.togetherweremore.com

Native ChocTalk Facebook page: www.facebook.com/nativechoctalkpodcast

All Podcast Episodes: www.nativechoctalk.com/podcasts



Protecting your data, identity during spring break travel

By Paul Tucker, BOK Financial

Spring break is right around the corner. With travel season comes both excitement and potential risks to those planning to get away.

Whether traveling domestically or internationally this summer, it's important to take necessary precautions to safeguard your online security.

Cybersecurity threats are present year-round, but traveling only increases these risks. Travelers should use a VPN when going online, especially in hotels or high-tourist areas.

A VPN encrypts your internet traffic and masks your IP address, providing an important layer of protection for your online activities on public Wi-Fi networks. This prevents cybercriminals from intercepting your data and gaining access to sensitive information.

Protect your devices with the latest security patches as an extra precaution. Treat your mobile device like your home or work computer. By keeping your operating system software and apps updated, you improve your device's ability to defend against potential malware.

However, there are some things you may want to avoid doing on your mobile device—accessing sensitive online accounts such as banking or email in public.

A few other tips for money smart travel:

- **Carry multiple forms of payment.** Relying on a single payment method can be risky if it is lost or stolen. Consider carrying at least two different credit or debit cards from separate banks or networks (e.g., Visa and Mastercard). This provides a backup option to ensure you do not find yourself without access to your funds if one card were to be compromised.

- **Exchange dollars for foreign currency.** Prior to an international trip, exchange some cash for foreign currency to avoid excessive ATM fees and ensure you have cash available in areas with limited card acceptance.
- **Understand international fees.** When traveling abroad, it is important to understand the international transaction fees your bank and credit cards may charge.
- **Set travel notifications with your bank.** Most major banks offer the ability to set travel alerts through online portals or mobile apps. By informing your bank of your travel dates and destinations, it can help ensure that your legitimate transactions are not mistakenly flagged as fraud, and waste valuable vacation time trying to mitigate.
- **Protect your belongings from pickpockets.** Don't overlook physical security, especially in areas known for pickpocketing. Investing in a secure travel bag can provide extra protection. There are plenty of anti-theft bags available; these feature slash-proof straps, locking compartments and RFID-blocking material, and can be a great investment for protecting your belongings.

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Women's Indigenous History Month: An Indigenous Woman's Perspective

**By Montoya A. Whiteman (Cheyenne and Arapaho)
First Nations Senior Program Officer**



Cutline: Blackfeet women 1800's

NOTE: While researching information to develop a Legislative & Policy Update for First Nations Development Institute's email subscribers, Montoya was unfulfilled by the recognition and ready availability of resources that highlight, support and celebrate Native American women and their positive and inspiring role in U.S. history. This piece encourages us to always demonstrate the estimable standing and role of women in our families, communities and nations..

This story was originally published at the First Nations website involving Legislative & Policy updates

March is Women's History Month that annually recognizes the contributions and events, past and present, of women in the United States. If one were to visit online sites dedicated to this matter, it would be difficult to find a link with a compilation of resources such as literature, photos or exhibits dedicated to American Indian women. Once again, we emphasize our role and presence as the first residents of this abundant land.

Bless us with the knowledge and wisdom to live as a good relative, with happy hearts and strong spirits, who can face the next millennium with the courage of love and power of peace. ~ Henrietta Mann, Cheyenne

The roles that American Indian and Alaska Native women serve — including matriarchs, life bearers, cultural teachers, artists, storytellers, homemakers, healers, writers and mentors — is profound. The strength, knowledge, spirit, ingenuity and beauty of past generations are in each of us.

They wear an awl case to show they are industrious. They used this a long time ago to make clothes and tipis, everything. The little pouch is for a fire striker, to show they are hospitable and can make a warm home for family and visitors. They wear the knife case to symbolize generosity and the feeding of the people. ~ Lucy Swan, Oglala Lakota

Take a moment to reflect on your mother, grandmothers, aunties, sisters, and extended female relatives who

influenced you and who are an integral part of your life. Did you listen, watch and learn? Our gratitude is great to those who gave us our Indian ways ... who spoke, taught and encouraged us as individuals and as sovereign nations.

Smoothing away time with the fluid line of your memory I am in place at your table in the morning damp of your still dark kitchen I wait for you to come stepping through the curtained doorway you enter intent on this day restart the fire fill, place the kettle pull open the kitchen door inviting daylight to come welcoming it into your house—bringing it into mine. ~ Kimberly Blaeser, Anishinaabe

Is a congressional resolution or presidential proclamation necessary to move one toward valuing the meaningful and powerful influences women — all women — have made to our lives? Do you need encouragement to see the greatness in the woman or women whose hands molded the events, great and small, that shaped your being?

Remember your birth, how your mother struggled to give you form and breath. You are evidence of her life, and her mother's, and hers. ~ Joy Harjo, Mvskoke Nation

As the Light Snow Moon transitions to the Moon of Budding Trees, it is a time of rebirth, renewal and reconnection. We recognize the hardships, difficulties or suffering that are happening throughout the world. Reach out to a grandma living alone or to the woman who desires tranquility in her life.

Life's realities are harsh, but the spirit of American Indian women is everywhere. American Indian women's love, dedication, contributions, and their status in and to our Indigenous nations, is a daily blessing to us all!



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ALL NATIONS. ONE MISSION.

We invite you to "Come Grow With Us" this year as we continue to expand our programs, re-invigorate our local chapters, and provide more benefits to our members. Our goal is to **EDUCATE, EMPOWER** and **ENGAGE** the Native American business community. We look forward to having you join us as we make a difference in Indian Country! We are dedicated to working with all members of the community to advance the educational and economic opportunities for Native Americans throughout Oklahoma.