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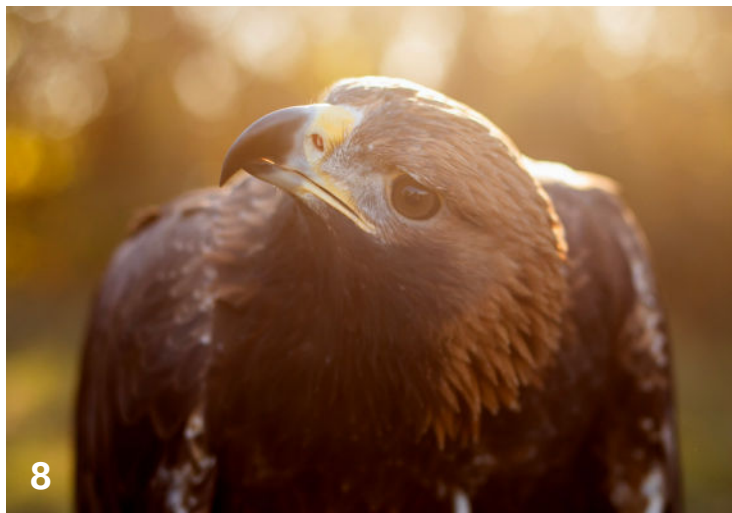
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Economic Development Director Vedrana Milakovic, Vice-Chairman Linda Capps and Consul General of Switzerland in Atlanta Rolf Ott

Swiss Consul General visits Iron Horse

Consul General of Switzerland in Atlanta Rolf Ott, along with Honorary Consul of Switzerland in Oklahoma Rico Buchli, visited Iron Horse Industrial Park on May 1, 2026, to learn more about Citizen Potawatomi Nation economic development initiatives.

Economic Development Director Vedrana Milakovic and Manager of Iron Horse Courtney Palmer led the tour, introducing Ott to Iron Horse operations, including Sovereign Pipe Technologies and the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ). Buchli has previously had a connection with Iron Horse and is familiar with its operations. The officials also met with Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett and Vice-Chairman Linda Capps.

During the visit, Ott and Buchli also toured the Eagle Aviary and Cultural Heritage Center and visited the Grand Casino to learn more about the Tribe’s history and culture.

“The consul general was interested in learning about Iron Horse and the Tribe because he is

interested in doing business in the future,” said Milakovic. “It was an honor to host them.”

The visit highlights increasing international interest in the FTZ at Iron Horse.

Iron Horse is one of CPN’s enterprises, located on CPN trust land in central Oklahoma. The park received its designation as an FTZ in 2015, allowing businesses located there to benefit from international trade advantages.

The 700-acre eco-industrial park is designed to recruit manufacturing companies interested in operating within a shared ecosystem. Companies are encouraged to collaborate by sharing resources, reducing waste, using shared warehouse space and transloading services, allowing goods to move efficiently between rail and truck transportation.

More information about Iron Horse Industrial Park is available at ironhorsecpn.com. 🔥

Vice-Chairman election candidates final statements

Editor's note: Responses from candidates appear exactly as they were submitted without editing for content or style.



Jason Smalley

A Position Built on Service, Communication and Unity

My family roots run deep in the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, and I believe that heritage carries with it a responsibility to serve with integrity, humility and respect. I am running for Vice Chairman because I believe our Nation is strongest when our people feel connected, informed and included in the direction we are headed.

Over the last several months, I have had the privilege of visiting with Tribal members through phone calls, text messages, emails and face-to-face conversations. I have heard from members in Oklahoma and across the country. Those conversations have confirmed what I already believed: our people care deeply about the future of this Nation. They want transparency. They want communication. They want opportunities to be involved. Most of all, they want leadership that listens.

My vision for the Vice Chairman's role is one of active service. I believe the office should help strengthen the connection between Tribal members and Tribal government. That means better communication, more outreach, and a clearer path for members to ask questions, share concerns and bring forward ideas. We should continue building programs that serve our elders, support our youth, strengthen our families and create opportunities for future generations.

I also believe we must protect and preserve our culture while continuing to grow economically. Culture is not just something we talk about; it is something we live, support and pass on. At the same time, we must continue to diversify our Nation's income, expand opportunities, create jobs and make sure our programs are sustainable for the long term.

My background in the Marine Corps, in public service and in business has taught me that leadership requires accountability, preparation and the willingness to make difficult decisions. But it also requires listening. I do not believe leadership should be based on fear or division. I believe leadership should bring people together, encourage healthy discussion and focus on solutions.

I am asking for your vote for Vice Chairman. I would be honored to serve our Nation and work every day to help build a stronger, more united future for all Citizen Potawatomi people.

If you have questions, concerns or would like to visit more about my vision for the Vice Chairman's role, please call or text me at 918-808-1669. I welcome the conversation, and I would sincerely appreciate your support and your vote.



Martha Kimberly Nootbaar

Thank you for the opportunity to become Vice Chairman of our tribe. As a granddaughter of Abram Burnett, I feel this responsibility in my blood. Linda Capps has been known as the "heart" of the tribe, and I would like nothing more to become the heart of our tribe.

For several years I have been asking Linda to allow me to learn from her and to see what this position would entail. She just kept saying that it wasn't time yet. The time has come; I think that with all my experience and activities that I have would make me the best choice for our tribe. I have a heart to serve, to bring us into a new era, of not only being self-sufficient but also of helping our brothers and sisters when they need it. Not just in Oklahoma and Potawatomi County, but throughout the United States.

Our history is vast and colorful, and our future can also be. We are the protectors of our earth. We must not allow our perceived need for more to overshadow our responsibility to our environment and families. Our future is our children, and we cannot destroy what they need to lead healthy lives.

I have answered many wonderful questions and have made statements over these past 4 months. Most of these questions have been on Facebook and I invite you to look us up. I have attempted to allow you to get to know me and what I would like to see our future become. I have seen wonderful suggestions, and I would like to see many of them come to pass. I would like to see us become a healthier nation in all areas! This would include learning traditionally, healthy habits, and most of all, one nation. We are Citizen Potawatomi Nation. We came from one area. The federal government saw to it that we were divided and moved in hopes that we would just go away. We must come together as one again and show the world that we are here. Let me lead you into the future as Vice Chairman. Please vote on June 27th in person. Please vote for me, Martha Kimberly (Kim) Nootbaar as your next Vice Chairman and keep the balance in our executive branch!



Charles Scott

Dear Voters,

We deserve the government we elect.

One candidate is a politician and is endorsed by the Chairman.

Another candidate is a very nice lady and running as a status quo candidate.

And myself, I'm not a politician and I'm not in support of the

status quo. We are experiencing a generational change of leadership and I'd like to show you what is possible as we change generations, I will focus on increasing our benefits for out of state citizens and in state citizens.

Migwetch

Charles Scott

Legislative election candidates final statements

Editor's note: Responses from candidates appear exactly as they were submitted without editing for content or style.

District 5



Lorrie Underwood

By the time this article is published, most votes will have been cast and we will be days away from election results. Citizen Potawatomi Nation will face exciting new change as the roles governing our tribe are being filled in the coming years with people bringing new and innovative ideas. Each new elected official

will bring a wide range of personal balance between business and tradition. We need that balance of holding tradition to keep a firm grip on tribal sovereignty, while using business sense to grow as a nation. My hope is that as we move forward, all seats will eventually be filled with people who can honor culture and tradition while strategically moving our tribe forward in business aspects.

I hope our voting numbers grow. I hope that every person voted for the candidate he or she believes will selflessly serve our tribe to the best of that candidate's ability.

In this age of technology, if you are not local to any Potawatomi and find yourself seeking connection as a tribal member, I urge you to join the facebook groups. You will find committed people to guide you. Listen to them and be aware that you might not get the answer you are looking for. Think on those answers. Also, be your own advocate. Don't wait to be spoon-fed culture or instantly included. A lot of knowledgeable people will hold back, waiting to see if you are genuine. Make effort, not excuses. Be respectful. Migrate to people who resonate with you, and get to know them. Technology is great but at some point move your journey from the keyboard to your car keys.

Get out there and MEET PEOPLE! Go! Offer tobacco, and learn from people. And above all, enjoy your journey.

I have enjoyed this election experience and I am also happy it is coming to an end. Many people encouraged me to use AI to write or for my picture and I cannot do it. I believe AI has a place but it is not in trying to convince others of personal greatness. With me, what you see is what you get, in all of my dedication and flaws.

I want to thank everyone who voted, those who voted for me, those who reached out to me, everyone who believed in me.

Special thank you to my family, and my husband, Kevin Underwood.

Pètëgizhgokwé – Lorrie Underwood



Ryan Hubble

Hello Friends,

When this article is published, most of you will have already sent in your absentee ballots. If you haven't voted yet, please vote (whether it's through an absentee ballot or in person at the festival). One of the great responsibilities we have as tribal members is to vote and voice our opinion. Voting

is a right and a privilege and is something that can really impact our Tribe and our people.

Of course, I would love to have your vote. As I've said in previous articles and what I want to reiterate here is that I love our Tribe. I want to see this Tribe grow and help meet

Continued on next page

the needs of our tribal members. One of the ways to meet those needs is to review the tribal budget and appropriate funds. I do have experience with this and feel like I could add value in helping our Tribe grow in a fiscally responsible way.

My other purpose for running as the District 5 Representative is to help the members within our district. It's important for tribal members outside of Oklahoma to feel a closeness to the Tribe. If members can't make it to the family reunion festival each year, I want members to feel like they know the Tribe and understand all the great resources and programs available to them through district meetings.

I appreciate all your support and look forward to meeting you all!



James Newberry

Bozho Nmezodanek,

By the time you read this, reunion will be over.

Elections decided and we will be looking forward to next year's reunion. This final statement had to be in by May 12th. At the time I'm writing this we don't know who will be elected. So, I'll just say "If you voted for me,

I hope you did. "THANK YOU". If you didn't, that's okay. You did your duty and voted. I'll still love all the cousins and I'll be looking forward to seeing everyone at the great district meetings whoever wins (Lori or Ryan) will have in the future. If anyone would like to contact me for whatever reason. (Lori/Ryan hint, hint) newberryjamesk@gmail.com

District 7



Katie Bowie

Challenger

I would like to start out by expressing gratitude to all the kind people who have gone out of their way during this process to help answer my questions, give advice, support my efforts, contribute to my campaign, encourage me, reach out to introduce themselves or came out to meet in person; Chi

Miigwetch! I have learned a lot during this process & it has been very interesting to say the least, by the time the majority of people in my district read this, they will hopefully have already submitted their absentee ballots. One thing that has been heavy on my mind is how we have an inevitable change of leadership in our tribe that is coming along very soon & while I think that unfortunately scares some people, I am very encouraged by this fact.

I believe that our legislators have a responsibility and obligation the members within their districts and after speaking to many other district 7 members, these are some of the things that I would like to be able to help offer: Two gatherings every year that move to different locations so that it alleviates the hardship from members to be able to attend. I would like to see fun, cultural activities offered at these gatherings (Language Bingo, art contests, small craft projects for example) . I would like to have an official district 7 website and social media site that regularly post updates and relevant events happening to give members additional opportunities to join together in their communities. I would like to form an elder & youth council that meets virtually a couple times a year so that other members can feel some autonomy in our tribe to come together and let our leaders know what they would like for their district. At the heart of any tribe should be community, no matter its size and there are so many ways in which we can build the type of community even though we live so spread apart.

Thank you for this opportunity to even be considered for this trusted position to serve my fellow tribal members and have a chance to advocate for the change that a lot of us have been hoping and praying for & i want to leave you with this prayer: "Creator, Thank you for this day (*Mamogosnan igwein ode gishek*) Thank you for yesterday (*igwien nago*) watch over my relations (*kowabmak ndenwemagnek*) Thank you (*Miigwetch*)"



Mark Johnson

Incumbent

As Election Day approaches for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation District 7 Legislative seat, I find myself reflecting not just on the past 16 years, but on the responsibility that comes with the oath you entrusted me to uphold. When I first took that oath, I promised to represent every member of District 7 with integrity,

commitment, and a focus on the long-term strength of our Nation. That promise has guided me every single day.

We have faced moments together that tested us. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our Nation stepped forward in a way that demonstrated who we are at our core providing more than \$84 million in direct support to our members through CARES Act and ARPA programs. That wasn't just policy. It was people helping people. It was our values in action.

Throughout my time in office, I have worked to ensure that every member, especially those living outside Oklahoma, has access to meaningful services and a connection to their Tribe. Programs like CPN Care, with 24/7 access to healthcare, are part of that commitment. At the same time, we have continued investing in our

language, culture, and education, because knowing who we are is what gives strength to everything we build.

But our success also brings challenges. Attacks on Tribal sovereignty have not disappeared, and they require steady, experienced leadership to confront. I have worked to strengthen our Nation's financial position and support responsible growth so that we remain independent, resilient, and prepared for whatever comes next. With our membership now approaching 40,000, the responsibility to future generations weighs heavily and rightly so.

This work is personal to me. I carry forward a legacy of service that began long before I held this office, and I have tried to honor that legacy in the way I serve you. My 40+ year career in the fire service

taught me that leadership is not about words, it is about showing up, standing firm when it matters, and doing the job the right way, even when it's difficult.

I am proud of what we have accomplished together, but I also know there is more work ahead. I would be honored to continue serving you, to keep fighting for our members, and to help ensure that our children, and their children, inherit a Nation that is strong, connected, and enduring.

I respectfully ask for your trust and your vote. Please return your ballot or vote in Shawnee on Election Day.

Igwien / Heartfelt Thanks
Mark Johnson / *Wisk Mtek* (Strong as a Tree)
Representative, District 7 🔥

Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

Bozho, jayek (Hello, everyone),

It has been a busy summer. We recently wrapped up a community game night on May 13. We will share pictures next month.

By the time this goes out, we will have finished up two beginner classes and an intermediate class. We are expecting about 20 folks to join us for our two-week Beginner Potawatomi Immersion. Our Intermediate/Advanced Immersion camp takes place June 1-12.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone at Festival. We will be having a number of classes. On Friday, June 26, Josey Wood will be teaching a class on making birchbark canoes at the Cultural Heritage Center from 9 a.m. to noon. That evening we will be playing bingo. On Saturday, June 27, we will be playing dice and bowl. We will have an immersion class and children's class Saturday.

Still coming up this summer is our Youth Language and Culture Camp July 6-10. We have a lot of great resources for folks to start learning the language. For updated information on classes, email language@potawatomi.org.

If you haven't checked out our self-paced learning options, go to learning.potawatomi.org. There is an

introduction course, a conversation-based course, a children's course and a grammar-based course.

We also have a course at 7000.org that is based on sentences used in various areas of the house. A variety of learning videos are available on our YouTube channel, @CPNLanguage. We have classes, songs, cartoons, full length movies, cultural teachings, skits and so much more.

You can also find a Potawatomi crossword puzzle at cpn.news/crossword.

Our dictionary at potawatomi.org has an awesome amount of content with over 10,000 words. Over 90% of the words have audio. There are tags for looking up words by topic, like nouns > animals > mammals. There is also a verb conjugation tool, which helps with VTA Independent verbs. It's a great tool for a verb pattern that has close to 35 combinations. There are also related words, so if you look up horse, you might find the verb to ride a horse or other nouns such as saddle, mare, stallion, etc.

We also have a couple of ongoing classes every Tuesday. Shelly teaches an elders class from 9 to 11 a.m. I have an intermediate/advanced class every Thursday from 3 to 4:30 p.m. These classes are both in person.

If you are ready to learn our language, we are ready to help you.

Migwetch (Thank you). 🔥



HAVE A VOICE

in our Tribe's future, cast your vote this month!



Elect **(Kim)**
Martha
NOOTBAAR
 CPN Vice Chairman

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

**RE-ELECT
 MARK JOHNSON**

For District 7 Legislator

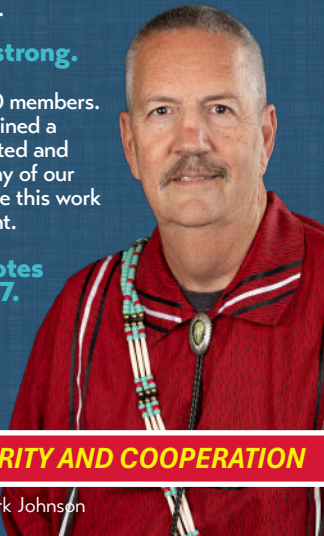
It has been my honor to serve as the District 7 Legislator since 2010. I am proud of my voting record and the work I've done on behalf of our members. I am asking for your continued trust and your vote in the upcoming election.

Standing together, we are strong.

Our Nation now has almost 40,000 members. Through hard work, we have maintained a strong financial position and protected and expanded benefits on which so many of our members depend. I hope to continue this work on behalf of the members I represent.

I can only do so with the votes of the members of District 7.

PLEASE EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE!



HONOR, INTEGRITY AND COOPERATION

Paid for by Mark Johnson



**VOTE
 RYAN
 HUBBLE
 FOR DISTRICT 5**



- » **Family Focused**
- » **Financially Minded**
- » **Certified Public Accountant**
- » **Tribe Conscious**
- » **Community Driven**

Paid for by John "Rocky" Barrett

EXPERIENCE MATTERS

RE-ELECT MARK JOHNSON

For District 7 Legislator

A member of the Vieux and Johnson Families

mark.johnson@potawatomi.org
559-351-0078



As a professional firefighter for 40+ years, I have always lived by three guiding principles: HONOR, INTEGRITY AND COOPERATION

Paid for by Mark Johnson



Fort Morgan Colorado
Jamie and Family



Glendale Arizona
Susan and Kathleen



Grand Island Nebraska
Teena



Roswell New Mexico
Tyler



BOZHO
NDENWÉMAGNĒDĒK.

It has been an HONOR to participate in this process. I have met many kind and caring people on my travels. I have talked to and texted with so many great people. NO MATTER how this election turns out and no matter WHO is chosen, that is the way WE have chosen it to be, by our VOTE.

THANK YOU, to each of you who placed your trust in me by your vote.

PĒTĒGIZHGOKWĒ
LORRIE UNDERWOOD



paid for by Lorrie Underwood



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Kishko

turns two





The CPN Eagle Aviary celebrated the golden eagle, *Kishko*, for his second birthday in May. *Kishko* can be found perched on a glove or tethered during visits to the Aviary.

Kishko, which means “second born,” hatched May 24, 2024. His parents laid two eggs that season, and the first to hatch was a female. *Kishko* hatched a few days later, making him smaller than his sister, which put him at risk of being bullied.

Aviary Managers Jennifer Randell and Bree Dunham observed the eaglets as long as possible, trying to avoid imprinting. Eventually, they removed *Kishko* from the nest to give him a chance at survival because he was not receiving adequate care in the enclosure.

“Our number one job for *Kishko* and every resident here is to provide them with the best quality of life we can, and that looks different for every individual,” said Randell.

Randell and Dunham took him into their home in an incubator where he could be monitored and fed every two hours for the first few weeks.

Personality

“Being hand raised from four days old, *Kishko* is a full imprint,” said Randell. “He doesn’t identify as a bird. He thinks he is one of us.”

The sisters shared that he has preferences for who feeds him, how he is fed and that he knows how to get what he wants.

“We spend a lot of time together, sometimes answering emails or fielding phone calls, and when he wants your attention on the glove, he’ll lean in like he’s going to take a big bite of your face,” said Randell. “That’s hard to ignore.”

Randell and Dunham explained that his needs differ as a full imprint compared to the non-imprinted eagles and hawks.

“Eagles are a lot like horses in that they have a good sense of energy and trust,” Dunham said. “There’s a feedback loop between us when he’s on the glove. We can sense his energy as much as he can sense ours.”

The Aviary managers described *Kishko*’s personality as playful, curious and energetic.

“He spent a half hour chasing a cricket in the grass and was startled each time it would jump up out,” Randell said. “He still turns his head upside down or backwards to look at things rather than turn around. He’s protective of his space and very vocal when he sees the wild eagles or geese fly in. He’s been chatty since he was small.”

The sisters also shared other parts of his fun personality such as his love for standing in his water pan before a bath and mock-killing sticks and rocks. One of his favorite rocks to mock kill came from the Yellowstone River near where his younger siblings were released in Montana.

While *Kishko* is fully imprinted, the Aviary managers work to balance his human interaction with natural instincts.

“We provide him with as much natural enrichment as we can and expose him to as much of the natural world as







possible. He is free lofted in his enclosure, with no jesses or leash, for flight and muscle development," said Randell.

Randell said they also provide logs, sticks and rocks for him to perch on.

"It is our responsibility to make sure he is conditioned, well adapted and adjusted to people and different environments to create that balance so he does not have stress," she said.

Developments

At age two, golden eagles begin to mature. During breeding season, *Kishko* has become vocal and started to show breeding behaviors.

"Goldens in the wild might begin courting but wouldn't spend the same amount of time with their potential mate and won't nest until they are four to five years old," said Randell. "*Kishko* has accepted us as his mates."

Randell and Dunham said that golden eagles are partial molters and carry tail and flight feathers from previous years. They also explained that his first molt of body feathers, starting at the head and working down the body, are normal.

"It takes roughly three to four years for a golden eagle to replace all its flight feathers," said Dunham. "Molt usually begins March through May of their second calendar year and ceases for the year by November. As you may see from the recent photos, he is right on schedule, and he looks as if he has a comb over."

Randell and Dunham also pointed out his eyes are lightening in color, similar to his father's.

Daily routine

The sisters, alongside *Kishko*, begin every day with *sema* (tobacco) at sunrise. As *Kishko* matures, he has started to vocalize at dawn.

"When we go out to put our *sema* down and thank *Mamogosnan* (Creator) for him waking us up to a new day, he chatters and calls to us," said Randell. "It's a blessing and truly a gift to welcome the day with him."

After cleaning his enclosure and checking on the other eagles, Randell and Dunham take *Kishko* outside to take in the sights and sounds surrounding him.

He enjoys getting his vitamins twice a week and expects dinner "promptly at 6 p.m. lately."

"Perhaps he remembers that as a regular part of his diet when he was growing. His favorite food is usually quail. However, he would love it if the resident cotton tail came within his reach," Randell said.

At sunset, he returns to his enclosure for the evening. The Aviary managers spend five to eight hours with him daily.

On tour days, Randell and Dunham said *Kishko* has started to greet guests and seems to enjoy their company. He has become a familiar presence for many visitors over the past year.

To learn more about the Aviary or schedule a tour, visit potawatomheritage.org. 🔥

Connect to your culture with CHC classes

Whether Tribal members are just learning about their heritage or have grown up close to CPN culture, Family Reunion Festival offers a chance for them to forge stronger ties through classes and presentations scheduled throughout the weekend. From tours of the CPN Eagle Aviary to workshops to learn techniques for making regalia, there are many ways to explore Potawatomi culture.

Learn more about Potawatomi culture and history

For those who want to appreciate and learn more about Potawatomi culture, there are several different options.

Tours to the CPN Eagle Aviary are available each day. Tours begin at 7 a.m. Friday and Saturday and at 8 a.m. Sunday and are available each hour, with the last tour beginning at 11 a.m. Those wanting to participate must register online at portal.potawatomi.org. A bus will transport those who have signed up from the CHC to the Aviary.

An Aviary Q&A session will also take place from 2 to 3 p.m. Friday and 1 to 2:15 p.m. Saturday in the CHC classroom.

For those who want to learn more about the Potawatomi language, there will be a *Widmēwshnak é Yawyen* (Tell Us a Little About Yourself) workshop at 11 a.m. Friday in the CHC classroom. Interdepartmental Language Lead Robert Collins will host that class, where participants learn about personal introductions in *Bodéwadmimwen*. Collins will also host *Shishibé* (Potawatomi bingo) at 11 a.m. Saturday in the classroom.

Several presentations are also scheduled.

Jane Fleischfresser will talk about how to harvest, prepare and store traditional dandelion tea in a Weed to Tea presentation at 1 p.m. Friday in the CHC classroom. She will also go over preparing and using herbal ointments in a Healing Salves workshop at noon Saturday in the classroom.

Lauren Kelly will present Living Potawatomi Art at 9 a.m. Friday, and she will talk about trends and must-watch artists in the world of Potawatomi art today. She will also host a From Canvas to Career workshop at 4 p.m. Friday.

Kabl Wilkerson will present The Strange Life of Wa'puka, detailing a look into one of the CPN ancestors, at 9 a.m. Saturday.

Brad Peltier and sons, Bryce and Chase, will host a lacrosse/stickball demonstration from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. Saturday.

The CHC museum and gift shop will also be open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday, from 8 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. and then from 5 to 6 p.m. Saturday, and from 8 a.m. to noon Sunday.

Recording family history

Anyone interested in learning about or preserving their family history can attend workshops at the CHC.

There will be an archives demonstration at 10 a.m. Friday and again at 10:15 a.m. Saturday in the CHC classroom. Collections Manager/Registrar Peter Kavourgias will explain to those attending how to navigate the CHC's research platforms.

Tribal members can also schedule family and veteran interviews, where they can document their own history through video interviews. Interviews can be scheduled from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and from 8 a.m. to noon Saturday. Pre-registration is available through portal.potawatomi.org. See more about Heritage Interviews on page 23.

Learn to make traditional items

Throughout the weekend, there will be classes about how to make several items. All skill levels are welcome. Seating is limited, with registration available online. Most classes are free, but shawl fringing is \$40.

Friday morning from 9 a.m. to noon, classes in the Long Room will include medicine bag making, loom beading, canoe making, turtle rattles, pucker toe moccasin earrings, shawl applique and a shawl fringing class.

From 1 to 4 p.m. Friday, the Long Room will have classes on basket weaving, beaded claw clips, beading earrings, loom beading, turtle rattles, applique and shawl fringing.

On Saturday, there will only be a morning session for classes, with the CHC closing in the afternoon for General Council. Classes from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday in the Long Room will include corn husk doll, medicine bag, loom beading, salve making, pucker toe moccasin earrings, applique and shawl fringing.

There will also be classes geared toward the younger generation.

For children, there will be a loom beading class, a turtle keychain (pony bead) class and a pony bead keychain class, all from 9 a.m. to noon Friday in the Long Room of the CHC. In the afternoon, children can participate in a corn husk doll class, a basket weaving class and a pony bead keychain class, all from 1 to 4 p.m. Friday in the Long Room.

Saturday classes for children include pony bead keychain, basket weaving and turtle keychain making from 9 a.m. to noon in the Long Room.

For more information, view the schedule of events handed out at registration or call the CHC at 405-848-5830. 🔥



Baylee King with Coach Vaughn

King carries Tribal flag for university

Johnson family member Baylee King had the chance to represent her Tribe at a softball game this spring.

Rogers State University, located in Claremore, Oklahoma, hosted a game on April 11 where the university honored tribal members by having each player carry their tribal flag during a ceremony.

King, who plays second base and was a junior at the time, was able to receive a Citizen Potawatomi Nation flag to carry.

"I loved representing my Tribe and getting our name out there more," she said.

Though she didn't know she was Potawatomi when she was younger, she said she is still learning and growing in her knowledge of Tribal culture.

That day, Rogers State took on Fort Hays, and King said she and her teammates won both games.

She said she has played softball since she was about 6 years old, and she chose Rogers State so she could be close to home for her last two years of school.

"What a blessing it has been," King said.

She began her collegiate career at Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, where she earned All-Conference honors in the Great American Conference and was awarded the NCAA Division II Rawlings Gold Glove at second base.

King is pursuing a career in occupational therapy and hopes to eventually serve and support her Tribal community. 🔥





Honored families for 2026 Family Reunion Festival

Each year at Family Reunion Festival, several of CPN's founding families are honored.

For 2026, honored families are the Acton, Bergeron, Bruno, Curley, DeLonais, Greemore and Slavin families.

The *Hownikan* publishes family history articles highlighting honored families throughout the year. Find stories on the Acton, Bergeron and Bruno families in the January, February and March editions. The Curley family will be highlighted in the July issue, with DeLonais, Greemore and Slavin following in subsequent months.

To see the honored families scheduled through 2028, go to cpn.news/honoredfamilies.

What to do at Festival

Are you a member of one of the families being honored? Festival might be a good time to connect to family you haven't seen in a while or to meet new family.

However, there are also events you can participate in during the weekend.

Each year, photos are taken of all of the honored families. Go to the dance arena at 9:30 a.m. on Saturday to join in a group photo for your family.

Honored families also lead the way into the dance circle at Grand Entry during Saturday evening's powwow.

You might consider participating in heritage interviews at the Cultural Heritage Center. The interviews are intended to capture an oral and visual record of Tribal members and their experiences. Schedule an interview at portal.potawatomi.org under the Festival interviews tab.

If you have ever wanted to research your family history, Festival is a good time to get information on how to start. CHC Collections Manager/Registrar Peter Kavourgias will explain how to navigate the

CHC's research platforms at 10 a.m. Friday and again at 10:15 a.m. Saturday in the CHC classroom.

CPN's founding families

It is a longstanding tradition for the Nation to recognize the 49 families that make up the Citizen Potawatomi Nation.

The Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced thousands of Native Americans, including ancestors of CPN tribal members, to walk from their homes in the Great Lakes to reservations west of the Mississippi River and eventually south to Indian Territory. Multiple removals took place from the 1830s to 1850s, with ancestors moving from Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.

Some Potawatomi families were removed to Missouri and later Council Bluffs, Iowa, while others moved to the original Kansas reserve in eastern Kansas. Later, all removed people would be consolidated on a single Kansas reserve near Topeka.

In 1861, members of the Potawatomi Nation met with federal agents to sign a treaty that promised to acquire fee-simple land allotments and a chance to apply for U.S. citizenship (though the majority did not receive citizenship until the 20th century). After signing a subsequent treaty in 1867, families sold their allotments and used the proceeds to purchase a new reservation in Indian Territory, where CPN has its headquarters today.

This information and more is available through the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's Cultural Heritage Center, which provides resources to keep the Tribe's history safe and accessible for generations to come.

Those who may have Citizen Potawatomi family photographs, documents or other relevant items and would like to assist with preservation efforts by providing copies can contact the CHC at 405-878-5830. 🔥

Festival offers a variety of youth activities

Family Reunion Festival offers a variety of youth activities to keep them busy throughout the weekend. Activities like sports, crafts and competitions are included.

This year, the pool in the child development center will not be open. However, the pool and splash pad at the Festival grounds will still be available.

Friday

Youth arts and crafts will go from 9 to 11:30 a.m. and then from 1 to 4 p.m. in the South Reunion Hall.

The youth coloring contest for ages 12 and under will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the South Reunion Hall.

The swimming pool and splash pad at the powwow grounds both open at 9 a.m. The pool closes at 7 p.m.

Chess and checkers for ages 15 and under will start at 1 p.m. at the South Reunion Hall. The games conclude at 3 p.m.

The youth dance begins at 7 p.m. just south of FireLake Discount Foods. Dancing continues until midnight.

Saturday

Registration for the ages 15 and under art contest opens at 9 a.m. at the South Reunion Hall. Registration concludes and judging begins at 10 a.m.

Youth arts and crafts begin at 9 a.m. in the South Reunion Hall. Staff will pause for a lunch break at 11:30 a.m. and then continue from 1 to 4 p.m.

The swimming pool and splash pad at the powwow grounds are both open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The three-on-three basketball competition for youth ages 14 and under begins at 9 a.m. at the after school facility gym, located next to the CPN Wellness Center. Competition continues until the winners are crowned.

Sunday

On the final day of Festival, the swimming pool at the powwow grounds will open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. 🔥



Festival welcomes all to games, competitions

The 2026 Family Reunion Festival at the Citizen Potawatomi headquarters is quickly approaching, offering a variety of games and competitions for all. See a list of events below.



Art competitions

Tribal members of all ages and experience levels can enter the art competition.

Tribal members ages 16 and older can enter one piece into either the amateur or the professional categories of the adult art contest. (The professional category is for artists who have been paid for the type of work they enter. The amateur category is for those who have never been paid to create the type of art they enter.)

Submissions can include all types of modern and traditional art, and the art does not have to include Indigenous themes.

For professional artists, the winner will be selected by a vote of Festival attendees taken in the foyer of FireLake Arena. First place wins \$300.

Amateur artists can enter one piece of art into either the photography/painting category or the category for other mediums. Winners of the amateur art contest will be selected by a professional artist, and prizes are \$300 for first, \$200 for second and \$100 for third place.

Registration for the adult art contest is Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at the FireLake Arena. All entries must be the work of the artist without assistance and should not contain AI-generated material of any kind.

Prize winners will be announced during General Council, where the money will be awarded.

All entries for the adult art contest must be picked up by 3 p.m. After that time, the art will be left unattended.

For Tribal members ages 15 and younger, art contests are available for four age groups: ages 5 and younger, ages 6-9, ages 10-12 and ages 13-15.

Each participant may enter one piece of art, and art can be submitted on Saturday between 9 and 9:30 a.m. at the South Reunion Hall. All pieces must have been created before Festival but within the past three years.

First, second and third place winners will receive a gift card.



Hand Games

Hand Games is a traditional Potawatomi competition that goes back generations. Each Family Reunion Festival, teams compete on Friday night at the pavilion.

To compete, all you need is a team of seven people. Two hidiers from one team each hide a colored bead in one of their hands. The other team's picker attempts to guess where the beads are. The hidiers must stay in the circles painted on the ground but can still use tactics such as dancing and singing to distract the pickers.

Once the judge calls for hands forward, the picker uses a stick to indicate one of four guesses for the location of the beads. The hidiers reveal the location. If the picker guesses correctly, their team gets a point. If they do not guess correctly, the other team gets a turn.

Teams are eliminated until only one remains. The winning team receives \$100 for each of the seven team members.

If you do not want to compete on a team, an auction takes place beforehand, where you have a chance to bid on which team you think will win. Each team has a flag that is sold in the auction. The winning team receives 25 percent from the auction, with the remaining 75 percent going to the person who bought their flag.

Find more information about hand games on the *Hownikan* Podcast at cpn.news/handgamespod.



Dance competition

During the powwow, there will be group, social and competitive dances. Competitive dance categories will include men's traditional, men's fancy/grass, women's traditional and women's fancy shawl/jingle dress.

When dressing for the dances, women should have legs covered by ankle-length skirts and should carry a shawl and wear a shirt that covers the shoulders. Slacks and a ribbon shirt are appropriate for men to wear. Everyone should wear closed-toe shoes.

For more information about powwow etiquette, see the story in the May *Hownikan* edition on page 24.



Other competitions

There are several other competitions to enter throughout the weekend, so be sure to check your schedule. You could be the next winner of the fry bread making contest, or maybe your family will win one of the sports competitions. There's softball, golf, volleyball, dominoes, checkers, chess, three-on-three basketball, archery and horseshoes. Children can enter a coloring contest, chess and checkers tournament and youth softball throwing.

Due to construction around the pond, there will be no fishing competition this year.

Prizes for some of those competitions can range from \$100 for first-place individuals to over \$1,000 for first-place teams.

Look for more details in the Festival registration packet. 🔥



Capps retires after 36 years of service to Tribe, community



Those who know Citizen Potawatomi Vice-Chairman Linda Capps best describe her leadership with the words: grace, compassion and love. After 36 years of service to the Tribe and a lifetime of service to the community, Capps is retiring, leaving behind a legacy that will be remembered by many whose lives she has impacted.

Capps, the youngest of seven siblings, was born in Harrah, Oklahoma, where she attended Harrah High School before earning her bachelor's degree in business from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and a master's degree in adult education from the University of Central Oklahoma.

Capps spent years working in education. She taught business at the high school level, served as Title IV Indian coordinator at Tecumseh Public Schools and taught basic education to adult Native Americans at Gordon Cooper Technology Center (GCTC). She also coordinated the Bid Assistance Program at GCTC.

Outside of education, Capps has sold real estate, worked in purchasing and credit at OG&E, operated a steam cleaning business and worked as a landman.

Throughout her career, Capps has also served on many boards and professional organizations including Oklahoma University's Planning Committee on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) for Southwest Center of Human Relations Studies, Community Advisory Council of the Kansas City Federal Reserve, a board member of the Federal Reserve Bank Branch of Oklahoma City, Board of Directors of Rural Enterprises of Oklahoma, GCTC Foundation Board and a long-standing member of the Board of Directors for Sovereign Bank, owned by CPN.



Over the years, she has been recognized across Indian Country as a recipient of many awards such as Oklahoma Citizen of the Year, the Small Business Administration's Oklahoma Minority Advocate of the Year (1997), Shawnee Chamber's Gordon Richards Achievement Award (2016), Kate Barnard Award (2017), Don Bodard Friend of Youth Award (2017), Tecumseh Citizen of the Year (2012 and 2020), Pottawatomie County Most Powerful Woman (2020) and the Journal Record's Native American Leaders in Business (2021).

She has also received other special recognitions such as being inducted into the GCTC Hall of Fame (2010), awarded an honorary doctorate in humanities by OBU (2014) and winning first place in the *Countywide & Sun's* Pottawatomie Power Polls (2020).

When Capps became an elected official for CPN in 1987 and Vice-Chairman in 1990, the Tribe employed less than 500 employees.





Today, the Nation employs more than 2,300 people and serves nearly 40,000 Tribal members.

Departments and services also expanded during her administrative tenure. Workforce and Social Services Director Margaret Zientek, who has worked under Capps for 29 years, said she witnessed that growth firsthand.

“When I first started, Workforce was a large grant for the Tribe at the time — it was just us and housing,” Zientek said. “We have grown, and that’s under the guidance of Capps and the Chairman.”

Though her career includes many accomplishments, employees, Tribal members and others close to her say her influence is what they will remember most. Several Tribal members and employees, who have known Capps for more than 20 years, shared memories of her leadership and compassion with the *Hownikan*.

Zientek said, “She’s helped me grow. If I can lead with half the grace that Capps does, then I feel good.”

Workforce Manager Melinda Duin, who has worked for the Tribe for 26 years, said Capps encourages employees to continue learning and growing.

“Linda has always been so great with letting us explore new avenues to help people in different ways,” Duin said. “She’s always been an advocate for education and

training. Social service work is extremely hard on the worker because your heart aches for people and your brain is constantly trying to find ways to help people. Ms. Linda giving us the opportunity to go to trainings, recharge the battery and better serve people is huge.”

Duin described Capps as both a mentor and role model.

“She lives and serves with her heart,” Duin said. “I aspire to be like her.”

Burt Patadal, who serves as the re-entry and diversionary lead counselor for the Workforce and Social Services’ Tribal Re-entry Program, has worked for the Tribe for 25 years and said Capps is a good person to work for and that he would do anything for her and the Chairman.



“She’s patient and she’s a good woman,” Patadal said. “She listens to my opinions on things and trusts me. That’s the best thing in the world — to have someone’s trust.”

Former Workforce and Social Services Director Carol Levi, who worked for the Tribe for more than 35 years, said Capps consistently made people feel valued.

“If Linda saw there was a need, that’s when her compassion would come in,” Levi said. “If someone needed help, she wasn’t afraid to go see what she could do. She’s easy to work with and she will make time for you. You just don’t get that very often when people are that busy.”

For Administrative Assistant Dennette Summerlin, watching how Capps treats people makes her want



to be the same way. Summerlin has worked as Capps' assistant since 2003.

"One of the greatest things about Ms. Capps is her love for the employees," said Summerlin. "She is compassion and love, and that is something a lot of people leave out as leaders because they are so focused on policy and process. Sometimes we forget our people are human and could be going through something, so for her to give them grace is something."

FireLake Discount Foods Marketing Manager Nicole Sanchez, who has worked for the Tribe for 26 years, said Capps has been a source of guidance and encouragement throughout her adult life.

"I lost my mother while in high school, so I have been so blessed to have amazing women like Ms. Capps in my adult life to help me grow as a woman, mother, Christian and Tribal member," Sanchez said. "She's just allowed me that space and given me grace to grow."

Sanchez said Capps is someone she can go to if she has a question or needs guidance.

"She leads with her heart," Sanchez continued. "She's so classy in everything that she does — her actions, her demeanor. She's one of a kind. If there's anyone I would want to be like, it would be her."

Sanchez described Capps as "a beacon, like a lighthouse."

That guiding light extended to the Potawatomi names Capps gave Sanchez and her children. Sanchez reflected on her daughter's Potawatomi name, *Memegwe*, which means butterfly. She shared her daughter will be interning in the butterfly program at the Aviary this summer.

"Capps has always encouraged us to spread our wings and fly," said Sanchez. "I think about how long it's taken her retirement to take shape, just like a butterfly in its process. It's time to release it and let it go."

Sanchez continued, "I don't think I would be the woman I am today if it wasn't for her guidance, love and encouragement. I truly don't. I know I've had a lot of amazing people in my life, but she will forever be the one who holds a special place in my heart." 🔥





Pre-K students get a three-peat at language fair

The Potawatomi Fire aren't the only CPN group with a three-peat championship under their belt. This year the Pre-K class took first place at the language fair for the third year in a row.

Each year, the Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair takes place on the University of Oklahoma campus in Norman, Oklahoma. Since 2003, hundreds of youth from Oklahoma and other states come together to present songs, poems and more in more than 40 different Indigenous languages.

Interdepartmental Language Lead Robert Collins took about 15 of CPN's Pre-K students to participate in the in-person performances at the language fair this year. In addition, 50 students from the after-school program participated in the drop off/mail in submissions.

Pre-K students competed in large group skits, students ages 5-6 participated in the video submission category, and after school students ages 7-12 took part in the art submission category with the theme of "Language at Home."

Of those performances, the 4-year-old students placed first for their in-person performance of *Bozho/Bama miné*. The 5-6-year-old students placed second for their *Ké Penojéyek Ndawmen* video performance submission.

"We want to thank everyone who helped us this year, whether by practicing with us, making regalia or simply cheering us on. *Igweyen*," Collins said. "Language is the thread that connects generations. By speaking it, we repair what was broken and create what is yet to come."

View winning submissions form ONAYLF at cpn.news/2026/languagefair. 🔥

Help contribute to oral history by scheduling a heritage interview

Whether this is your first Family Reunion Festival or your 40th, and no matter how important you think your story is, the Cultural Heritage Center invites all Tribal members to add to its collection of heritage interviews.

Heritage interviews are video interviews meant to capture the experiences of Tribal veterans and CPN family members of all ages.

"We have over a thousand hours of interview recordings and that number continues to grow. It is one of the largest oral history collections of any Indigenous community in the country. Despite its size, we still need so much more and are extremely thankful to the community for contributing," Cultural Heritage Center Director Blake Norton said.

Interviews can be scheduled at portal.potawatomi.org under the Festival Interviews tab. The Cultural Heritage Center will also have signage around the Festival grounds and at registration with information about how to participate.

Interviews can be scheduled during Family Reunion Festival from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thursday and Friday and from 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 2 p.m. Saturday. Staff lunch breaks are scheduled daily from noon to 1 p.m. Interviews can be scheduled in time slots of 30 minutes, with the option to extend to an hour.

Interviews often start with basic information, such as the Tribal member's name and age, before becoming a discussion that allows the interviewees to talk about whatever they feel is important to them. Many participants share thoughts they would like to pass on to their future self or to future generations.

"It is like creating a time capsule where future generations of your family can hear your story in your words in your voice," Lenggenhager said.

Individuals can complete an interview one at a time, or families can choose to do a group interview together.

Those who are interviewed have the option to put restrictions on the use of the interview, though that rarely happens. Participants can request a video not be shown to the public or to family, or even request it not be shown until a certain amount of time has passed.

For those who cannot make it to Festival or who live far away, the CHC can schedule online interviews, utilizing software like Zoom or Microsoft Teams. To schedule an interview, please visit potawatomiheritage.com/tribal-heritage.

Look for more information about heritage interviews at registration and on signs located around the Festival. 🔥

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CPN facilities draw crowds

A number of exciting spring events at FireLake facilities are highlighting the Citizen Potawatomi Nation's growing investment in tourism, sports and community development across south central Oklahoma.

FireLake Arena recently hosted Shawnee High School graduation, one of seven commencement ceremonies held there in May, underscoring how the Nation's venues serve both local residents and out-of-town visitors.

That impact was especially visible with parking lots filled almost to capacity with the NJCAA South Central District Tournament, held May 13 through 17 at the FireLake Ball Fields.

Junior college teams from across Oklahoma competed on Field 9, while youth softball teams competed on fields 1 through 8 all weekend. Many players, coaches and families stayed at the nearby FireLake Hotel.

"Our new developments, including the fields, support our long-term goals of expanding tourism and services in Shawnee and across south central Oklahoma," said Planning, Design and Engineering Director David Oman. "Traveling teams are able to stay at the FireLake Hotel during their visits and support other local businesses and restaurants."

There are several projects currently underway for the Nation, including a new FireLake Discount Foods location in Asher and future projects planned in Choctaw and near the FireLake Hotel and FireLake Casino in Shawnee.

Among the largest of those developments is a new championship softball stadium under construction



Events like graduations and softball tournaments have drawn large crowds to CPN enterprises.

at the FireLake Ball Fields in Shawnee. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is expanding its sports and tourism offerings with the stand-alone stadium, which will seat up to 4,100 fans, making it one of the largest softball venues in Oklahoma. The field is being built to NCAA Division I standards and will feature a 24-by-32 digital scoreboard. The project is expected to be completed in early 2027, with tournaments likely to start later that year.

"The ultimate goal is to become a premier host for softball," said FireLake Ball Fields Director Kelly Reavis.

The addition further expands the FireLake Softball complex, which now includes 10 synthetic turf fields used year-round for amateur, high school and collegiate play. Fields 5 through 10 opened in 2025, increasing the site's capacity to host larger tournaments and multi-day events. 🔥

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Veterans Report

Bozho (Hello),

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization's Color Guard has a very busy schedule in June. We will be presenting the Colors at meetings in the CPN Cultural Heritage Center and the annual Citizen Potawatomi Nation Festival. The veterans will have a table set up in the Firelake Arena where you will register for the Festival. Stop by the table and get your red veterans ribbon. Our CPN Veterans meeting will be held on the second floor of the FireLake Golf Club on Saturday at 8 a.m.; I know that this early, but we have our flag folding ceremony at 9:30 a.m. and flag retirement at 10 a.m. Everyone is welcome to join us for these activities.

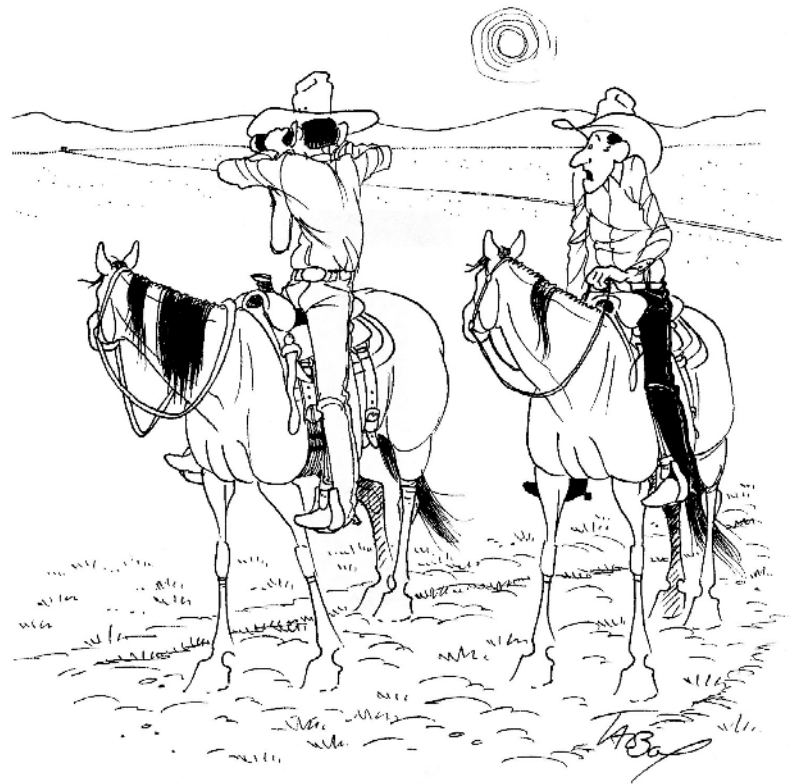
I have a new computer now, so, the CPN Veterans Reports should be more regular...and the cartoons.

Remember that the monthly meetings of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Veterans Organization are on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m. (or as soon as you can get there) at the CPN Cultural Heritage Center in Shawnee, Oklahoma. The meeting dates are listed below:

June 27, Saturday at 8 a.m. on the second floor of the CPN Golf Club | July 28 at 6 p.m. | Aug. 25 at 6 p.m. Sept. 22 at 6 p.m. | No meeting in November | December date to be arranged.

We hope to see you at as many of the meetings as you can make.

Migwetch (Thank you),



WELL, NOW YOU GOT ME A WONDERIN'
IF WE CLOSED THAT FOOL GATE!

Daryl Talbot, Commander, 405-275-1054

Daniel Castaneda,
Vice Commander/Event Contact, 209-207-2317

David Barrett, Treasurer, 405-613-7313

Lauren Samsel, Secretary, 253-970-2900

Chris Lenggenhager, Facilitator, 405-878-5840 🔥

Prayer circles must be reserved for use during the Family Reunion Festival.

Call 405-275-3121 to reserve your time.

Are you dually enrolled?

To remain an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, you are not allowed to be enrolled in any other Indigenous tribe. If you are dually enrolled, or if you think you might be, please contact Tribal Rolls at 405-878-5835 or tribalrolls@potawatomi.org.

From the executives



John "Rocky" Barrett Tribal Chairman

Bozho, nikan, (Hello, my friend),

Summer is a busy time around the Nation, with many events taking place including Family Reunion Festival, the upcoming Gathering of Potawatomi Nations and our annual FireFlight Balloon Festival. This doesn't even count our Potawatomi Fire pro basketball season at FireLake Arena, our new ballfields complex and the new administration building openings we are all looking forward to. We look forward to seeing you and your families at these events as school ends and the temperatures warm.

As you all know, the Nation joined the Potawatomi Confederation in November, culminating many years of discussions between the various Potawatomi tribes and First Nations. That work continues under the chairmanship of Gun Lake Potawatomi until July, when Forest County Potawatomi will take over chairmanship responsibilities.

One benefit of this closer cooperation came from a connection our staff made through the confederation at the 2026 Reservation Economic Summit. The Potawatomi tribes in attendance held their own mini-summit, where the economic development officials and financial staff from the tribes networked and discussed shared priorities.

A great opportunity for all Potawatomi regardless of location that we learned of is something called the Tribal Talent Connect shared by our cousin Tribe at the Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi.

Waséyabek (wah-say-a-beck) is NHBP's economic development entity, and its name means "New Day's Light." The firm manages a national portfolio including federal contracting, professional services and industrial operations. While based in Michigan, *Waséyabek's* companies have jobs open across the U.S.

The Tribal Talent Connect program serves as a centralized bridge for all members of federally recognized Tribes to apply for open jobs. It is not a traditional job board. *Waséyabek* designed it to match professional talent with openings across their entire family of companies.

Potawatomi elected leaders have known about our respective tribes' economic endeavors, but have often relied on the Gatherings as the best opportunity to hear updates. Connections from staff and employees alongside our tribal citizens is where the Confederation can improve our shared Potawatomi communities and their interests.

Check all of this out at waseyabek.com/careers if you are interested.

I often close these columns with a heartfelt thanks for the honor of serving as your Tribal Chairman these past 40 years. I am sincere in stating that it has been, and remains, the greatest honor of my life. With elections at Family Festival, we will have a new vice chair position with Linda Capps retiring from service to our Nation. A significant portion of the 40 years I have served have been in good working partnership with my friend Linda. Transitions in elected office are good for any government. But I believe we all share in the bittersweet knowledge that office is no longer served by Vice-Chairman Capps. Speaking as Tribal Chairman and as a Tribal citizen, we owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to her and her family for allowing us to share so much of her time and effort over the years.

Migwetch (Thank you),

John "Rocky" Barrett | *Keweoge* (He Leads Them Home) | Tribal Chairman



Linda Capps Vice-Chairman

Bozho (Hello),

As I considered the content of this column (my last) and while I was thinking about the highlights of my career as your Vice-Chairman, it occurred to me that I could write all day about major events, governmental changes, economic developments, strategic advances and infrastructural improvements. I could do so, but the most important element of our Tribe would go unmentioned. Our Tribal members are by far the most important for me to remember as I leave this prestigious office. When I reflect back on all the years of regional and district meetings, telephone conversations, one-on-one meetings and family gatherings, I realize that I am blessed beyond belief to have known our Tribal members and their families. It is easy for me to convey my feelings for our Potawatomi people because I know and love so many of you and your family members.

When Chairman Barrett began our first annual Family Festival in 1998, it was a perfect setting for our Tribal members to interact more between individuals and families. We teamed up for competition, visited more during events, danced together and participated in new activities. As a Tribe, we increased namings and improved our knowledge about traditional ceremony.

In addition to our Tribal members, our CPN employees (both CPN members, other tribal members and non-Native) are the “best of the best” employees in the land. They are the reason that our Tribe is one of the most respected Tribes in the state. We get compliments about CPN employees throughout the whole county and state. We also get constant compliments about our programs. Among those are our health programs, enterprises and entertainment, food and restaurants, housekeeping, emergency management, maintenance, environmental, water district program, electrical, mechanical, transportation, Indian Child Welfare (ICW), Women, Infants & Children (WIC), domestic violence, education, asset management, social services, workforce, accounting, cultural and heritage, travel, human resources, information technology, public information, manufacturer, vehicle maintenance, administrative services, police and security. These are most of our programs that house our nearly 2,400 employees. We also have Sovereign Bank and 12 branches, of which their numbers do not reflect in our employee count.

I will also miss our exemplary Legislators, elected every four years since 2008. We are very fortunate to have the caliber of elected officials that we have at CPN. Our officials are talented, intelligent, educated and experienced. They are good-hearted, conscientious and honest Potawatomi citizens. Their constituents’ well-being is first on their minds and in their hearts. Their integrity is impeccable. They continually fight for services and programs for Tribal members within their districts. Truth of the matter is the Tribe cannot afford to provide equal benefits throughout the U.S. when the lion’s share of resources are government dollars meant for a limited jurisdictional area of our former reservation. This does not mean that our out-of-Oklahoma legislators give up on inquiring. They truly care!

Last, but certainly not least, are my two executive team members, Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett and Secretary-Treasurer D. Wayne Trousdale. I have a great deal of respect for these two gentlemen. They are, indeed, extraordinary leaders. I would put them up with any other tribal leader in the U.S. They are business experts, and they possess many attributes that define outstanding leaders. CPN is in good hands! Your two top leaders will not steer you wrong. They will not jeopardize the assets of the Tribe, they will not endanger the environment of our natural resources, they will protect the rights of our people and will advance our culture and heritage while preserving our language. Your Chairman is known throughout the country. He is admired and sought after as a speaker and sovereign nation builder. Until we meet again, I will always remember my people — our people.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Linda Capps | *Segenakwe* (Black Bird Woman) | Vice-Chairman
Work: 405-275-3121 | Cell: 405-650-1238 | lcapps@potawatomi.org

From the legislature



Steve Livingston District 1

Bozho (Hello),

One thing I hear often from citizens, especially those of us outside Oklahoma, is the desire for more connection. Citizens want to feel closer to their Potawatomi identity, our culture and one another. Living in District 1, where citizens are spread across many states, that connection won't happen by accident or convenience. Sometimes we have to go looking for it and put ourselves in places where it can happen.

The good news is there are many opportunities, in-person and virtual, to experience our culture and community.

In June, many Tribal citizens will travel to Shawnee for our annual Family Reunion. For some families, this is an annual tradition. For others, it may be their first time stepping onto Tribal grounds, visiting the Cultural Heritage Center, meeting relatives, driving by family allotments, or simply being surrounded by other Potawatomi people.

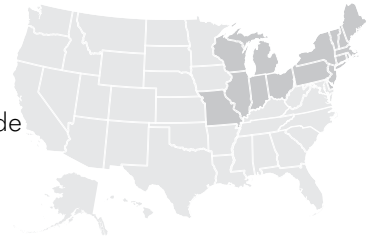
My grandma and her cousins attended intertribal powwows in the late 80s and early 90s, but I did not attend my first Family Reunion until around 2015 or 2016. It was the start of many more gatherings and new friendships. If you can attend, talk to people. Ask questions. Visit the places you may have only read about in the *Hownikan*. I hope to meet as many District 1 citizens as I can while I am in Shawnee.

Later this summer, the Potawatomi Gathering will be hosted by Forest County Potawatomi in Crandon, Wisconsin. Gathering brings together relatives from across the different Potawatomi nations. I attended my first Gathering in 2019 in Wasauksing, Canada, where I spent the week with wonderful people, including Lindsay Marean and her mother, Linda Jones, Kaya DeerInWater, and the renowned writer-sisters and educators Robin Wall Kimmerer and Barbara Wall.

There are other opportunities throughout the year, including Pokagon's powwows, Gun Lake's Sweet Grass Moon Powwow, Nottawaseppi Huron Potawatomi's annual powwow, and Forest County Potawatomi's *Meno Keno Ma Ge Wen*. These are not CPN events, but they are still chances to be among our Potawatomi relatives.

I am also exploring a District 1 gathering in *Wasētenak*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, for the unveiling of the *Anishinaabek* exhibit at the Grand Rapids Public Museum. Several CPN citizens, including Anna Johnson, Laura Hewuse, Alan Melot, Maryellen Godinez and others, submitted 4x4 beaded tiles for the exhibit entrance. Please watch for updates on cpndistrict1.com/events!

Connection does not have to happen in person, although there is no replacement for meeting in person. Over the past few months, we held virtual events with Anna Johnson, including finger weaving and ribbon skirt classes. Last September, I spoke with Cultural Heritage Center Director Blake Norton about exploring more virtual opportunities



Learning and discussing Bodwēwadmimwen (Potawatomi language) with Tribal citizen, and friend, Lindsay Jones Marean at the 2019 Potawatomi Gathering in Wasauksing.



Making hominy with Justin Neely and Dan Kimewon at the 2019 Potawatomi Gathering in Wasauksing

for Tribal citizens. I hope these recent classes show that the format is possible and appreciated.

Language is another powerful way to connect, which I'll speak to more in a subsequent article. CPN offers many online language opportunities, along with programs through *Bodwéwadmimwen Éthë Ték*, Pokagon, Gun Lake, and others. You do not have to be fluent to begin. You just have to begin. There is no greater way to connect with our Potawatomi heritage than through language.

Please keep an eye on cpndistrict1.com for the most up-to-date information on District 1 events. If you know of an event where Potawatomi or CPN citizens are gathering or would like to help organize something in your area, please reach out.

Connection is not something we can always wait to find us. Had I not stepped out of my comfort zone, shown up and built relationships, I would not be

your District 1 legislator today. Connection starts the moment we decide to stop waiting and start showing up.

Steve Livingston | Legislator, District 1 | steve.livingston@potawatomi.org



Eva Marie Carney District 2

Bozho, nikanek (Hello, friends),

Necessary Turbulence, Side by Side with a Lovely Wedding

My friend and fellow CPN District 2 citizen Kimberly Idwe Gishek Chatfield Pratt is extraordinarily accomplished and modest, to boot. Among her recent activities was editing, along with other Air Force Academy women graduates, the book *Necessary Turbulence: Fifty Years, One Unbreakable Sisterhood Forged in the Crucible of the Air Force Academy*. The publishers summarize the book as follows:

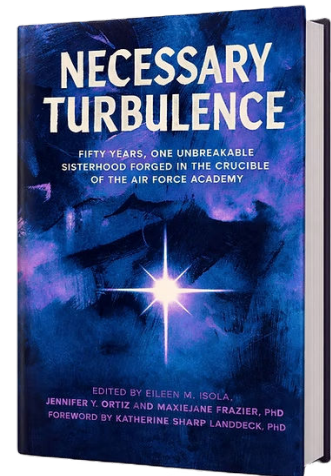
"In 1976, 157 young women marched under the words 'Bring Me Men' shining above the iconic ramp that led to a world that had never imagined

them. They and the more than 12,000 women who followed were told they were destroying military standards and promised they would never graduate. More than 7,000 women have proved them wrong. An inspiring narrative of sacrifice, resilience, leadership, purpose, and hard-won belonging."

The book publishes June 23, 2026.

Kim's career highlights include graduating in the fourth class with women from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1983; being selected as the first woman to be an Airborne Intelligence Officer on the EC-130, Airborne Battlefield Command and Control Center (1986-1988); serving as first Commander of the 139th Intelligence Squadron, Georgia Air National Guard (2008-2010); and serving as the Senior Reservist at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (2012-2013). In 2013, she retired as a Colonel from the Air Force Reserves culminating in a military career spanning 34 years.

Just this April, Kim experienced the joy of a child's wedding — her son Patrick Chatfield married Kaitlin Clark during a beautiful ceremony held at Sylvaside Farm in Purcellville, Virginia. Alan and I were delighted to attend and celebrate with the couple and all their family. A singular pleasure of serving as the District 2 Legislator is that I get to know delightful people who invite me in to celebrate their milestones. Later that week, I was excited to run into her mother, Nancy *Wisgakkwe* Korzeniewski Zarzecki, and Nancy's husband Russ Zarzecki, at National Airport a few days after the wedding, as they headed home and I headed off to New Mexico and Colorado for school visits on behalf of The Kwek Society. I am fortunate to count Kimberly, Nancy, and their families as chosen family.



Interesting Podcast and Indigenous Tourism Guidebook

I recently ran across an interesting podcast and an updated guidebook — maybe both will spark your interest and provide summer enlightenment and entertainment.



2024 D2 Winning Hand Games Team

The podcast, “Tending Our Roots with Indigenous Methodologies,” is a new, ten-episode podcast that explores Indigenous methodologies in research, evaluation and community practice. It is hosted by Dr. Miigis Gonzalez (Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwe) and Dr. Jill Fish (Tuscarora Nation of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy), and features discussions on how Indigenous knowledges and ways of being address the structural limits of Western frameworks.

The guidebook, published by American Indigenous Tourism, is titled *American Indians and Route 66* (cpn.news/guidebook). It includes information detailing Indigenous tours, sites, cultural stops and attractions. Route 66 is turning 100 this year. It certainly is past time that Indigenous communities changed the narrative and shared our distinct stories and heritage. Road trip anyone?

Family Reunion Festival/Hand Games Team Participation/Meetup

I hope to see you on our reservation grounds at the end of June. Please send me a note if you want to schedule a meetup, please let me know if you want to be on our District 2 Hand Games team on the Friday night of the Festival, and please come up and say hello if I haven’t spotted you and done so first!

Migwetch (Thank you),

Eva Marie Carney | Ojindiskwe (Bluebird Woman) | ecarney@potawatomi.org | evamariocarney@gmail.com
evamariocarney.com | PO Box 5595 | Arlington, VA 22205 | Toll Free: 888-849-1484 (voicemail)



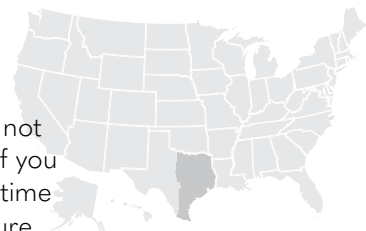
Brenda Trevino District 3

Bozho jayek (Hello, everyone!)


Our Waco meet-and-greet on April 18 included several who had not been to a district meeting in quite a few years. Meeting each of you has been a real treat! Migwetch (Thank you) to those who took the time out of your weekend to come, especially the youth. You are our future and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. The Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation (CPCDC) dialed-in during the meeting to share a video of what they do for our Nation and to also relay specific things they can do for District 3 members in Texas, such as provide loans to kick-start a small business, counsel members on how to increase financial strength, assist with building individual credit through a small credit builder loan and the importance of starting a Children’s Investment Account (530A). Although I did have some technical issues with the wi-fi, everyone was patient and we eventually did get to listen to the presentation.

A copy of the postcard for the upcoming meeting in San Marcos, Texas, on June 13 is inserted on the next page. As with the earlier meetings, this one will start at 10:30 a.m. and end no later than 1:30 p.m. RSVPs are important for planning the food and giveaways. Please respond by email or with a call as indicated on the card.

Chances are you will receive this *Hownikan* shortly before the election takes place. Voting, for all CPN members 18 and older, is one of the



(Left to right) wisest, Linda Ledyard, youngest, Leah Wahlgren, farthest traveled, Nancy Burns, and Brenda Trevino.



CPN District 3 Meet and Greet

Special topic: Regalia and Dancing

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2026
10:30AM-1:30PM

SAN MARCOS ACTIVITY CENTER
501 East Hopkins St.
San Marcos, TX 78666

District meetings are for members, their spouses and immediate family.

Bring your tribal IDs to sign in.

Lunch Provided*

RSVP by June 8, 2026
to brenda.trevino@potawatomi.org or call or text 281-466-7427

Finally, please send me your email address and any other contact information you consent to provide so you can receive communication directly from me.

*Plus a raffle and give-a-ways for wisest, youngest and farthest travelled.

most visible ways we can show pride in this sovereign Nation and can take part in the direction of our future. Hopefully you have voted absentee or have requested a ballot that you can present when you vote in person during the Family Reunion.

Another way you can support our Nation is to attend General Council during the Family Reunion. A report on our enterprises, our bank and our budget are a part of this meeting as well as an announcement of the election results. Meet our directors and other employees who work on our behalf every day. Thank them for doing what they do to keep our Nation running.

Migwetch (Thank you) for allowing me to serve each of you! See you at Reunion.

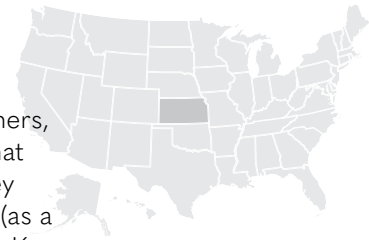
Brenda Trevino | Mkedewankwetkwe (Black Cloud Woman) | brenda.trevino@potawatomi.org | 281-466-7427



Jon Boursaw District 4

The History of Pappan's Ferry before Topeka

Who were the Pappans? They were four French-Canadian brothers, Joseph, Louis, Achan and Eurebe, who came to an area of what is now known as the Kansas River Valley as voyageurs/trappers. They soon met and married the Gonville sisters, who had each received (as a condition of the 1825 treaty between the U.S. Government and the Kanza (Kaw) Indians) an allotment of one square mile along the north side of the Kansas River. These allotments began at approximately present-day North Gage Blvd. in Topeka and extended east to Lecompton. Josette Gonville married Joseph Pappan, Julia married Louis, Victorie married Achan, and Pelggie married Annabel d'Aubrey. The couples moved to their allotments along the Kansas River around 1840.



Who used Pappan's Ferry? Thousands of Oregon-California Trail emigrants; Mormon Trail emigrants; military units accompanying supply trains; and later numerous travelers on the Underground Railroad.

When was the Ferry placed in operation? In the spring of 1841 the Bidwell-Bartelson party, generally acknowledged as the first pioneer party on the Oregon Trail, crossed with the help of the "Kanza." Pappan's Ferry is born.

Here is a listing of notable individuals and dates associated with Ferry:

1842: Lt. John C. Fremont, of the U.S. Topographical Engineers, crossed the river on a mission to explore and map the Oregon Trail. Accompanying him were two dozen men, including a guide named Kit Carson.

1843: "The Great Migration" marked the start of the large-scale emigration to Oregon and California. The first published reference to Pappan's ferry was made by Peter Burnett, later Governor of California.

1844: "The Great Flood" This was considered the largest flood ever to fill the Kansas River Valley. This caused the Pappans to close the ferry operation until the Spring of 1845.

On May 19, 1846, the infamous Donner-Reed party crossed on their way to California.

1849: The discovery of gold in California contributed to a substantial increase in the demand for ferry services.

1847-1848: Arrival of the Potawatomi Indians from their previous reservations in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Sugar Creek in Lynn County, Kansas. Several quickly established ferry operations further west as the Oregon/California pioneers traveled further west before crossing. These ferry operations were conducted by the Smith, Ogee, Wilmett and Darling families. I'm sure there were others.

1852: The opening of Ft. Riley created a substantial increase in demand for military travel between Ft. Leavenworth and Ft. Riley.

1854: The year the City of Topeka was founded along the south side of the river. Remember the original founders did not find a wilderness when they found Native Americans and the French engaged in commerce with hundreds of Oregon Trail emigrants as they waited to cross the river.

1856-1861: Conductors of the "underground railroad" escorted escaping slaves across the river by ferry to continue north along the Lane Trail. Records show that John Brown himself led several of these groups.

1859: Louis Pappan sold the ferry service to his son-in-law, Oren "Jack" Curtis, who was the father of Charles Curtis, eventual Vice-President of the United States (1929-1933).

Pappan's Ferry continued to operate until at least 1866. Railroads and more bridges caused the ferry system to be obsolete.

Upcoming CPN Elders' Potlucks

Dates for the Elder Potlucks held in Rossville at noon are:

June 12th	Hamburgers & Hot Dogs	RSVP by the 9th
July 10th	Pulled Pork Sandwiches	RSVP by the 7th

Bring your favorite side dish or dessert. Please RSVP to Tracy at 785-584-6171.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Jon Boursaw | *Wetase Mkoh* (Brave Bear) | jboursaw@potawatomi.org | 785-608-1982

2007 SW Gage Blvd. | Topeka, KS 66604 | Office Hours: Tuesday 9-11 a.m. | Thursdays 3-5 p.m. | Other times as requested



Mark Johnson District 7

Bozho nikanek (Hello friends),

Remember to return your mail-in ballot for this year's Tribal Election. If you haven't already returned it, do it now; it's not too late. It is your duty as a Tribal member of voting age to participate in our great Nation through voting when our Tribe has elections. Your vote is important; make sure your family across our Nation votes also. The results of the election will be announced during the General Council meeting during the Family Reunion Festival.

A whole year has passed since the last Family Reunion Festival in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and it is always a great time to visit with family and friends. I hope to see many of you in Shawnee. I am always available to talk and love

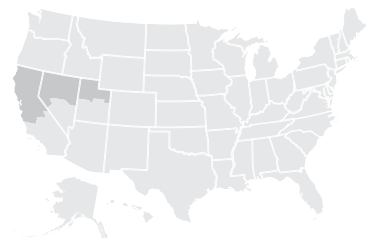
visiting with our members at the Festival. There is no better way to spend your summer vacation. The honored families in 2026 are: Acton, Bergeron, Bruno, Curley, DeLonais, Greemore and Slavin.

If you have never attended a Family Reunion Festival, or if it has just been a while, you should plan on attending. It will be a trip you will never forget and will bring you much closer to your Tribal family and heritage. Many classes and speakers are scheduled at the Cultural Heritage Center during the Festival, as well as tours of the Eagle Aviary. Games and sports are also held throughout the gathering. If you are an artist, you can enter the Tribal art competition with the winners announced at the General Council meeting on Saturday of the Festival, along with the Grand Entry dancing later that evening. More information and the schedule of Honored Families through 2028 can be found on the Tribal website at cpn.news/festival. I look forward to seeing you all at the Family Reunion Festival; my number is listed below if you would like to meet and talk while you are there.

Once again, I would like to say what an honor it is to serve you as your District 7 representative. As always, give me a call and I will be happy to work with you on any questions you may have or provide you with additional information you may need to access Tribal benefits that are available to you. Please also take the time to give me a call or send me an email with your contact information so that I can keep you informed of the happenings within the Nation and district.

Migwetch (Thank you),

Mark Johnson | *Wisk Mtek* (Strong as a Tree) | 559-351-0078 | mark.johnson@potawatomi.org





Dave Carney District 8

Bozho, nikan (Hello, friends),



It's time to start planning for outdoor get togethers. On the westside of the mountains, I've planned a few cookouts and have lost the weather lottery — getting almost rained out in May and June. This year I am hedging my bets and we are gathering in August in the central part of the state.

If Tribal members contact me at least a few weeks before the event to receive a Potawatomi name, we may have a private Naming prior to the event.

Since this is the June edition of the *Hownikan*, it's possible that Tribal citizens may be reading this during Festival and prior to voting in our Tribal elections. Looking at social media, it seems to me that there are some misconceptions regarding what legislators' roles should be and what actions they should be engaged in.

Duties of a legislator are to uphold the constitution and to speak and act by resolution. Other duties are reserved for the Executive and Judicial branches. Attendance and participation at quarterly meetings over the internet and a live meeting after Festival are bare minimums. What other duties should be happening? This is just my opinion:

Legislators should be responsive to requests for assistance from the citizenry in their district. This can range from navigating a Tribal program, to providing direction on where to have a cultural question answered. As a legislator, I have done my best to provide this assistance, however, I have learned to draw the line when an individual is abusive, slanderous or just nasty. In this job and others I have had, I like to say that I do not receive combat pay.

Citizen Potawatomi Nation		Saturday, August 15	
District 8 Cookout		11AM TO 3PM	
WEST VALLEY PARK SHELTER 1323 S 80th Avenue, Yakima, WA 98908		All Potawatomi and household members invited	
Burgers & brats lunch provided Plus presentations, art contest, and fun Please bring a dessert to share			
If there is interest, we may do a private Naming before the cook out - please contact me			
RSVP BY AUGUST 6 TO DNCARNEY@GMAIL.COM OR 360-259-4027 (please include number of people attending)			

Legislators should be writing a monthly or semi-monthly column for publication in the *Hownikan*. As you'd imagine, 16 individuals have different gifts, and writing may not be one of them — so this can be a real challenge. Frankly, there are some months where there is not a lot going on in a particular district, and some of us get inspired to go down the creative writing path. I have to say that I have learned a few things, not necessarily related to the Nation, by reading the *Hownikan*.

Legislators should be having some gatherings in their districts. Bringing the government to the people is something unique that we are doing — and it seems to be appreciated and successful where it is happening. I strive for at least two meetings a year in different locations in

District 8. This is a lot of work and planning and has led me to make friends and connect with Potawatomi in various parts of the district from Alaska to Montana. This has created lots of rich experiences.

And this leads to another misconception I'd like to shed light on. Legislators are indeed not provided with contact information for citizens. This is due to privacy and security concerns. I have over 500 email addresses that have gathered by having folks sign in at get-togethers or by reaching out to me. These folks receive regular updates, maybe too many sometimes. When I am no longer in office, I will ask people if they would like their email shared with the next district representative. Otherwise, they will not be.

And the last misconception is regarding Namings and other ceremonies. Legislators have no special knowledge or training to give Potawatomi names. CPN holds that if you have been given our name, you can name others. While I have named many citizens, I enjoy providing what knowledge I do have to assist others in Naming their family members.

By the way, save the date — Oct. 24 for the 2026 Fall Feast in Portland.

It is my honor to serve as your Legislator,

Dave Carney | *Kagashgi* (Raven) | dcarney@potawatomi.org | 360-259-4027



Paul Wesselhöft District 9

Bozho nikan (Hello friend),

A stair to nowhere

Paul Chrisstarlon Wesselhöft

A stair to nowhere, no one.

Concrete steps to embers, ashes.

White armed men with hate, matches,

Torches ignite porches,

Eradication, liquidation.

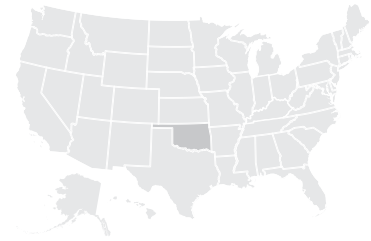
The assaulted woman's accusation was in doubt.

But another family aflame, pinned in, burned out.

Tulsa, 1921.

(Oklahoma history concerning African Americans, and I may add, Native Americans, must be accurately taught in our schools.)

Paul Wesselhöft | *Naganit* (Leader) | reppaul@gmail.com | pwesselhoft@potawatomi.org



Andrew Walters District 11

Bozho (Hello),

Well, here we are again. Coming up to the time we must make some critical decisions pertaining to the future of our Tribe. I don't claim to know all the answers. And even if I did and could back them up with PowerPoint presentations, facts, statistics and surveys, some folks would argue that I was wrong. Seems to be a trait imbedded in our DNA... "Don't confuse me with the facts."

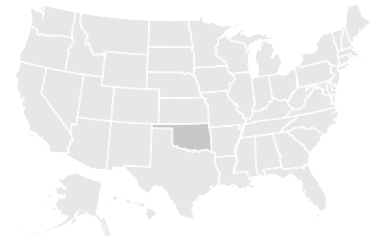
I've found that projections never seem to be right. I've also found that surveys never have enough participants to be accurate to any degree and most don't even ask the right questions. What I judge my decisions by is past performance. There's an old saying that "past performance is indicative

of future behavior." I agree with that. Whether it's stocks and investments, people's actions, elections, or governmental BS, I look at what's been done in the past and then chart my course aligned with that.

For years the Tribe has grown in number and in assets. Our business enterprises are strong. Our governmental functions and practices, although not perfect, are solid. It can be argued that there is always a better way to do something. And I whole-heartedly agree...but...I don't think that we should tear something apart, or run somebody off and then "re-vision" it, as has been suggested by some in the past. To do that is being ignorant and unappreciative of our past.

I believe that some mistake governmental functions for cultural endeavors. It is the legislative branch that makes law, reviews budget, applies for grants and those types of things. We also fund programs, as we can, such as language. We don't generally fight or poke each other in the eye with sticks. Our duties are limited by constitution. Things are discussed and opinions made in committees prior to meetings. This gives us time to work out the kinks and have a bill that we can live with.

(This is where the old sayings come out...) "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." We can fund all sorts of programs and provide all types of improvements that are beneficial to our Tribe, but we can't make you participate. Short of handing out money, free cars, and a 10-day paid vacation in the Bahamas, we have problems getting folks in large numbers to participate in the functioning of our Tribe. Only about 5% of the Tribe votes in our elections, but 95% applied for and received money from the ARPA funds of the COVID era. Sometimes I wonder if we should just pay people to vote...there's a thought.



Perhaps it's apathy, perhaps it's our fault in Legislature. Folks complain on Facebook and social media ad-nauseum about what we should do. And then they pontificate about how they think it should be done. But then again, it's only less than 2% of the Tribe that is vocally negative. I know that I receive very, very few emails from folks in my District (11). Most of the complaints I hear are from people who moan and gripe online about the Tribe. And surprisingly, most of those have no solution, no constructive comments that are novel in nature. Just noisy wind.

That's my thoughts, right or wrong. It's an honor and privilege to work with the Tribe in my capacity as District 11 Legislator. I love this Tribe and its people. My contact info is 1) Nibwemko@gmail.com 2) andrew.walters@potawatomi.org. I can also be reached by phone at the admin office, 405-275-3121. They'll take a message and I'll call you back...promise.

Andrew Walters | andrew.walters@potawatomi.org | nibwemko@gmail.com



Bobbi Bowden District 13

Bozho nikanek (Hello friends),

Our Nation provides many valuable resources, and some may not always be widely known. Before I became more involved, I wasn't aware of several of these benefits myself. I'd like to take a moment to highlight a few that can make a meaningful difference for Tribal members and their families.

For many families, owning a home is one of the most meaningful steps toward long-term stability. It's where memories are made, traditions are carried on, and futures begin to take shape. While the process can feel overwhelming at times, there are programs available to help make that path a little easier.

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation offers several housing programs designed to support Tribal members —and in some cases, other eligible Native American applicants — at different stages of homeownership.

One of the biggest hurdles when purchasing a home is covering upfront costs. Between the down payment and closing expenses, it can add up quickly. That's where assistance can make a real difference.

A one-time grant of up to \$2,125 is available to help with those initial expenses. Priority is given to CPN tribal members, and all CPN members across the United States are eligible to apply. Other Native American applicants may qualify if they live within Tribal jurisdiction, are age 60 or older, and meet income guidelines.

For those purchasing in Oklahoma, financing may need to be completed through Sovereign Bank in Shawnee. Timing is also important — applications should be submitted at least three weeks before closing, or no later than 30 days after.

If building a home is part of your plan, there is support available there as well. The Home III Construction Program offers a \$20,000 grant to help reduce the cost of building a new home within certain areas of Tribal jurisdiction. This program is available to CPN tribal members who meet income requirements and are able to finance through Sovereign Bank. Building a home is a big step, but having that kind of support can make it feel much more within reach.

For our elders, staying in their home safely and comfortably is incredibly important. The Elder Home Repair Program helps with updates that improve safety, accessibility and overall efficiency. This program is available to low-income Native American elders, with priority given to CPN tribal members living within Tribal jurisdiction or nearby counties.

Repairs are completed with a long-term approach in mind. While costs are secured through an agreement tied to the property, that obligation is released after a set period at no cost to the homeowner.

Every housing journey looks a little different. Whether you're preparing to buy, thinking about building or simply needing to make improvements to your current home, these programs are here to support that next step.

If you've been considering your options, it may be worth reaching out and learning more about what could be available to you.

For additional details, visit potawatomi.org.

Migwetch (Thank you) for allowing me to serve you and our great Nation,

Bobbi Bowden | *Pkuhshnoqua* (Bald Eagle Woman) | bbowden@potawatomi.org



Walking On

Ella Elizabeth (Betty) Hyatt

LaFromboise/Beaubien Family



Ella Elizabeth (Betty) Hyatt, 96, a lifelong resident of Deming, New Mexico, passed away peacefully in Las Cruces, New Mexico, on Tuesday, Feb. 17, 2026. Betty was born in Deming on June 5, 1929, to Vaun K. Peck and Elizabeth White Peck. She graduated from Deming High School then attended and graduated from the privately owned Albuquerque Business College.

After graduation, she moved back to Deming and worked at Deming City Hall. While working at the city hall, she met Tom Hyatt. They were married on Jan. 21, 1950. The city girl moved to the ranch 17 miles north of Deming. They lived in half of the hay barn with no electricity, only a wood stove and coal oil lamps. After several months they started building a small two-bedroom house. She quickly learned the workings of ranch life and loved it.

Betty was always active in many community organizations and events. She was a member of Chapter AT, P.E.O., a founding member of Cancer Support. She owned and operated Quest Realty in Deming for many years. Governor Bruce King appointed her to the New Mexico Environmental Improvement Board. She served on the New Mexico State Fair Board, appointed by Governor Garrey Carruthers. She was active in People for the West, CowBelles, Rotary and Silver Spikes.

Betty's greatest joy was her family and the family ranching business. She lived on the Flying U Ranch since marrying Tom in 1950.

Betty was preceded in death by her parents; her husband, Thomas Leedrue Hyatt; a grandson, Ryan Thomas Hyatt; a great-granddaughter, Jesi Hyatt; and a sister, Carolyn Gross.

She is survived by her children, Nancy Brantley and husband George, Jim Hyatt and wife Faye and Leedrue Hyatt and wife Sandy; grandchildren, Benton Hyatt and wife Carli, and Betsy Brantley Johnson, Seth Hyatt; and 15 great-grandchildren. Her grandchildren affectionately call her Gam.

She is also survived by half-sisters: Alice Cothorn, Velma Jean Boone, Cathy Philips-Olsen, Denise Beck, Debra Grandjean and Alma Franzoy-Capron; and also her loyal friend and companion, her Shih tzu, Collie.

Joan Lorraine Garrison (Patton)

Navarre Family



Joan Lorraine Garrison (Patton), 94, passed peacefully at her home with loved ones Wednesday, April 15, 2026, in Topeka, Kansas.

Joan was born to Kermit Leo Patton and Mary Martha Loveland on July 27, 1931. Joan was married to Alvin Greeson and later to Dale Garrison. They lived in Naples and Sebring, Florida. She loved her Florida brisk morning

walks and hunting for shells on the beach.

She is survived by her brother, Nolan Patton; her sons, Mike Greeson (wife Jill) and Craig Greeson; six grandchildren; and 10 great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her son, Skip Greeson (1950-2023).

She was very dear and close with all her family; we will miss and cherish her in our hearts forever.

Deborah Ann Weatherford

Toupin Family



Deborah Ann Weatherford, 61, died April 5, 2026, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. A private family memorial will be held at a later date, entrusted to the care of Wadley's Funeral Service.

Deborah was born Nov. 15, 1964, in Purcell, Oklahoma, to Dale and Florine Weatherford. Raised in the close-knit rural community of Wanette, Oklahoma, Deborah completed her high school education in 1983 before pursuing higher studies at

Murray State University, where she majored in animal husbandry. She later continued her academic journey at East Central University, focusing on education. Deborah dedicated much of her professional life to serving the community through her role as secretary for the Wanette superintendent and then as a child nutritionist with the Oklahoma Department of Education before her retirement. A passionate supporter of the University of Oklahoma's football team, Deborah found joy in the

spirited excitement of the game. Her zest for life was further reflected in her love for shopping, savoring good food, camping and spending cherished hours outdoors. In her youth, she delighted in showing animals and held the spirited roles of both high school and college cheerleader. Above all else, Deborah's greatest treasure was her family. She treasured every moment shared with her loved ones, especially her grandchildren, whose presence brought immense joy to her heart. Deborah will be remembered as a devoted woman whose warmth, dedication and love enriched all who knew her.

Deborah is preceded in death by her father, Dale Weatherford, and her mother and stepfather, Florine and Beacher Gilbert. Survivors include her daughter, Brittanie Weatherford-Helm and husband, Nathan Helm; her son, Bryan Weatherford and wife, Italie; her daughter, Dakota Weatherford; her grandchildren, Camron Weatherford and Callie, Georgia Weatherford, Charlie Helm, Emma Helm; her great-grandson, Cohen; her brothers, David Weatherford and Dale Weatherford; and her nephews, DJ Weatherford and Derrick Weatherford.

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David "Dave" Ray Abrams Sr.

Bertrand Family

With heavy hearts and deep gratitude for a life well lived, we announce the passing of David Ray Abrams Sr., who went to be with the Lord on March 9, 2026, at the age of 84.

David was born on July 5, 1941, and lived a life defined by strength, loyalty, laughter and love for the people around him. He proudly served his country in the United States Army as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division. His service reflected the courage, discipline and adventurous spirit that remained part of who he was throughout his life.

Above all else, David was devoted to his family. He was a loving and faithful husband to his beloved wife, Charlotte, with whom he shared a lifetime of love, memories and unwavering partnership.

He was a proud father to his children, David Ray Abrams Jr. and Traci Lee Jackson. His family meant everything to him, and he took great pride in being a steady presence, a protector and someone who could always bring a smile or a laugh.

One of his greatest joys in life was being "Pawpaw" to his grandchildren, Jane, Jaci and Jentri. They brought him endless pride and happiness, and he loved them deeply.

While his family grieves his passing, they also celebrate the incredible life he lived and the legacy of love, laughter, strength and loyalty he leaves behind.

David Ray Abrams Sr. will be deeply missed and forever remembered by all who had the privilege of knowing and loving him. His stories, laughter and the love he gave so freely will live on in the hearts of his family forever.

Monroe Edwin Jeffrey

Willmett Family



Monroe Edwin Jeffrey "Bud" Ne Begeshmonene (Sun Going Down Man), age 82 years of Shawnee, Oklahoma, passed from this physical life to his spiritual life on Dec. 4, 2025.

Monroe was born to Wilbert Monroe Jeffrey and Jessie Bell Crumbo Jeffrey on Jan. 14, 1943, in San Francisco, California. Monroe was a proud citizen of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and a

descendant of the Willmette family. Monroe received his native name on July 30, 2016, *Ne Begeshmonene* (Sun Going Down Man) from ancestors through ceremony and first cousin Minisa Crumbo Halsey. Monroe's Native heritage and family history was an integral part of his life. Attending CPN Family Festivals and Potawatomi Gatherings were some of his most treasured memories as well as visiting his Filipino family in 2024 with a visit to Cebo Philippines.

Monroe grew up in California, attending high school at Lynnwood High School in Lynnwood, California, as well as at Chula Vista High School, where Monroe was on the 5-man rifle team. Monroe led an interesting life as a young man in the 60s and 70s! With his life experience and employment over his 82 years of life one could see and feel his free-thinking spirit in all he did for himself and others.

Monroe relocated from California to Shawnee, Oklahoma, in 2014 and was active in many elder and social advocacy groups during his time here in Shawnee. He enjoyed a fulfilling life at CPN's Father Joe Murphy Elder Housing complex. Monroe was a believer in action over words, and I think that is the greatest lesson Monroe left with family and friends.

Monroe was preceded in death by his parents, brother Wilbur Eugene Jeffrey, and niece Wendy Jeffrey Kendell.

Those left to mourn his passing are nieces Carolyn Hill, Diana Witten, Angela Ford; great nephews and nieces, Timothy and Christopher Kendall, Ashley and Haley Hill, Heidi Severs, Gregory Dewolf and Michael Witten; cousin Minisa Crumbo Halsey and husband Jim Halsey; loving friend, Mariazal Ruiz and her children Marvin, Zach, Quirk, and Mareyah of the Philippines.

The **CPN Burial Assistance Fund** is available to all enrolled CPN members. Notify Tribal Rolls at tribalrolls@potawatomi.org or 405-878-5835 of member's passing to receive up to \$2,000 aid.

Submit obituaries at cpn.news/obituary

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