Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium announces tribes’ impact on Oklahoma’s economy

Tribes’ economic impact exceeds $15.5 billion in 2019

Native American tribes in Oklahoma had a nearly $15.6 billion impact on the state in 2019, according to a new study released in March.

It found that the tribes directly employ more than 54,000 people and support a total of 113,442 jobs for tribal citizens and non-citizens, accounting for more than $5.4 billion in wages and benefits to Oklahoma workers in 2019.

“This study shows just how important tribes are to Oklahoma’s economy,” said Neal McCaleb, Chickasaw Nation Ambassador to the United States. “We are helping create sustainable economies through our many valuable jobs as well as making other substantial and impactful investments into our broader communities. This is our home and we look forward to continued growth — growth that benefits all Oklahomans.”

This study, sponsored through the Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium, was released during a press conference at the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City on Wednesday, March 23. In 2019, the Consortium sponsored a similar study. The new report shows a significant increase of more than $2.6 billion in economic activity between fiscal years 2017 and 2019.

“Tribes are economic drivers as well as constant and reliable partners,” said Victor Flores, President, Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium and Director of Tribal Services, REDW, LLC. “Unlike corporations that move based on economic conditions, our tribes are here to stay,” he said. “Oklahoma is home, and we will continue to reinvest in our communities through job creation, critical service delivery and infrastructure development. Oklahoma is stronger when we all work together.”

“I’m very proud of the economic impact number in the state of Oklahoma,” said Tribal Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett. “What magnifies that is the fact that these Tribal governments are mostly rural and we can’t leave. It’s fairly easy to make money in Oklahoma City and Tulsa, it’s real hard to make money in rural Oklahoma. So, the impact those dollars have in the rural parts of our state keeps the economy alive.”

One of the most impactful contributions by the 38 federally recognized tribes has been in health care, particularly in rural and underserved Oklahoma communities. Tribal health care operates more than 45 facilities, providing care in most locations to both Native American and non-Native Oklahomans.

When health care is provided to Native Americans at tribal health facilities, the entire cost of care is paid by the federal government, resulting in savings to the state. In 2019, tribes paid $232 million in Medicaid expenditures, saving the state $86 million by requiring no state matching funds.

“Tribally owned and federal health centers across the state provide life-saving treatment and improved quality of life to Native and non-Native citizens,” said Nicolaus Barton, Executive Director, Southern Plains Tribal Health Board. “In 2019 alone, there were 3.5 million patient visits at tribal health facilities in Oklahoma,” he said. “By maintaining the health care safety net in rural areas, tribes are strengthening Oklahoma’s entire health care infrastructure and ensuring many healthy generations to come.”

Through gaming compacts between Oklahoma-based tribes and the state, tribal nations submit a percentage of their Class III gaming revenues for the exclusive right to operate casinos in the state. Oklahoma sends the first $250,000 of these fees to the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Of the remaining funds, 88 percent is earmarked for public education supporting all Oklahomans. The tribes have invested heavily to support local communities and efforts. Oklahoma tribes have paid more than $1.8 billion in exclusivity fees since 2006. More than $1.5 billion has been earmarked for public education.

In 2019, Native nations paid an additional $84 million to support Oklahoma schools, municipalities and other community initiatives.

“It is impossible to overstate the positive impact Oklahoma’s tribal nations have had, and continue to have, on our state,” said Matthew L. Morgan, Chairman, Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association. “Through our gaming industry, we employ more than 75,000 people, mostly in rural communities. We build roads and hospitals, invest in our public schools and universities and create programs to serve those who need assistance,” he said. “We are proud of our past, excited about things happening right now, and determined to leave the next generation an industry — and an Oklahoma — that they can take pride in.”

Kyle Dean, associate professor of economics and director of the Center for Native American and Urban Studies at Oklahoma City University, analyzed data from 16 tribal Nations based in Oklahoma and prepared the study.

The Oklahoma Tribal Finance Consortium’s mission is to advance tribal economics and strengthen tribal finance within the state of Oklahoma.

More information can be found at oknativeimpact.com.
New Fire dance teams bring the heat to Shawnee

As Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s new professional basketball team, the Potawatomi Fire, plays its debut season with The Basketball League, three dance teams packed with local talent perform by their sides. From the junior Sparklers, aged 9 to 12, to the Fire Girls, the team’s professional dance entertainment group, the dancers bring high energy, shimmer and charm to the arena.

Tribal member and Toupin family descendant Piper Whitecotton is a member of the Heat, the Fire’s high school aged hip-hop dance team.

Whitecotton, a junior at Bethel High School and pre-engineering student at Gordon Cooper Technology Center, began dancing when she was just 2 years old. Now, she trains and competes in a variety of styles through DreamCatcher’s Dance Company in Shawnee, Oklahoma, and cheers for her high school’s football and basketball teams.

“My mom was a dancer and so were my aunts. They always loved dancing growing up and thought I would enjoy it too,” she told the Hownikan in a recent interview.

She began in ballet — her first performance was to Que Sera Sera in a pink ballet tutu — but as she got older, Whitecotton expanded her training to include hip-hop, jazz and contemporary styles.

Contemporary dance is a particular favorite of Whitecotton’s, especially for solo dances.

“It’s kind of like soft and then hard-hitting,” she said. “I usually try to do the hard hitting songs that have softer parts so that I can transition and just try to do it all.”

She also enjoys taking on new characters for dances, especially ones with scenic storylines and intense movement — quite different from her usual happy and light personality.

New opportunities

Whitecotton heard about the Fire dance teams through her studio director, Aonisty Parks, who is also the Entertainment Director for the Potawatomi Fire, Whitecotton’s father, Justin Whitecotton, works for the Tribe as the Electrical Department Director, and encouraged her to consider auditioning.

Parks told the Hownikan that she’s excited for dancers to have access to opportunities that have not been readily available in the area until now.

“If you’re a dancer in this area, yes, you are going to be somewhat limited after you are 18 as to what you are able to do. And so to be able to have this opportunity to perform every single week is like over the moon,” she said.

Fire dance also provides new and exciting opportunities for younger dancers through the Sparklers and Heat teams, paving the way for dancers of all ages in the area for years to come.

“It’s way bigger than a dance competition,” Whitecotton said. “The older dancers actually get paid. So it’s almost like I’m professional. And if people see that, or come to a game, I can interact and just know more people and get more involved so that I have more connections for the future.”

The Heat performed during the second quarter at the Fire’s first home game at FireLake Arena on March 19, Whitecotton’s first performance with the team.

From the moment the music came on — Charlie Boy’s I Look Good — she was the picture of professional. Her movement settled right in the pocket of the rhythm, cool flows totally collected and accents punched with clarity and style. Confidence radiated as she led the team out of a column at center court into their final formation. Her expressions and energy were dynamic, engaging the crowd anew every second. As the last beat hit, Whitecotton dropped to the ground, one leg tucked behind her and the other extended, arms outstretched. The announcer boomed, ‘three HEAT!’ Whitecotton smiled.

The dance was complicated, Whitecotton told the Hownikan after her performance, but she felt like her team pulled it off successfully.

“You have to be all together, so you don’t have to just know the moves, but you have to know when you’re supposed to do them, and you have to make sure not to hit anybody. It’s a lot of teamwork, a lot of routines, formations, timing, musicality,” she said.

“I keep saying it, but it’s just really fun and makes me smile. We’re all dancing on the side when a song comes on, and singing along and having fun together enjoying each other’s company,” she said.

Also performing at the first home game were the Fire Girls. They led the players out onto the court with sharp chassés and glittering pompons, accentuating the entire evening with snappy jazz and pom dances. During the third quarter, they took the court for a kick line performance, drawing cheers from the crowd.

Community

The ability to provide quality opportunities for local dancers like Whitecotton to hone their passion and skill motivates Parks, who has dreamt of being a dance instructor since she was a young dancer herself. She also feels a strong sense of responsibility as a role model for her dancers and to impact the community positively through her work.

“I like to think that being a mentor to them is just my biggest job ever,” she said. “I’m so excited for the opportunities, but I’m also excited for the ways that we can give back to the community. I just feel like there’s so much responsibility that we have now. Yes, we have this great privilege, but it comes with responsibility.”

Whitecotton is especially excited for the impact the Fire will have on the Tribe and glad to be along for the ride.

“I think it’s a big deal that (the Tribe) got their own basketball team, to bring more attention and more money that they can use to support their family members and community,” she said.

“And, you know, with COVID, you’re going to need more money to get through everything, as well as just having fun again after everything everyone’s gone through. That’s a big part of it.”

The Potawatomi Fire is an expansion team of The Basketball League. They played their first home game at FireLake Arena on March 19, defeating the Little Rock Lightning 123-93. Follow the Fire on their website at potawatomifire.com and on social media at @potawatomifire. Follow the Fire Dance Teams at @FireDanceTeamOK, and find DreamCatcher’s Dance Company at dreamcatchersdance.com.

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Native fashion makes headlines, brings Indigenous beauty to forefront

In a time of fast fashion when customers often wear runway-inspired items a few times and discard them, many Indigenous designers and producers focus on creating unique pieces that stand the test of trends. Designer Leslie Deer prefers to make timeless pieces.

For her brand, L.A. Deer Apparel, she utilizes classic silhouettes with the potential to outlast the life of the wearer.

“Because to me, those were all made from scratch. I consider what I do, the apparel that I make, an investment, and they should be things that would last you for a long time. It’s nice to think that maybe even be handed down to another generation to be worn and shared and cherished,” she said.

She started her journey daydreaming about clothes she wanted to make herself while traveling across the country in the backseat with her parents.

“It seemed like so far-fetched to actually be able to think about creating or designing your own clothes,” Deer said. “Because to me, those were all made like in big factories with manufacturers. But as time went on, I did start making my own dance regalia. And people would comment on it a lot and encouraged me to continue sewing.”

Now, she owns a successful apparel company. She has participated in fashion shows, won awards at prestigious Native art markets and dressed highly regarded Indigenous thinkers and artists, including Joy Harjo. The recognition affirms Deer’s life goal and decision to earn a second bachelor’s degree as a nontraditional student.

“Sometimes it gets hard, and sometimes it’s challenging, and sometimes you’re tired and you just want to stop, but don’t ever give up. If you have a dream, if you have a goal, if you have something that you want, don’t ever give up, and don’t let anyone ever change your perspective. Don’t let anyone ever dictate to you. Your art should be like this,” Deer said.

Style, motifs

Deer feels that the designs for fabric and applique she creates keep her tribe’s Muscogee Nation motifs alive by incorporating them into wearable art. She said while Plains tribes’ motifs and patterns remain dominant, not many designers rely on southeastern tribal motifs’ style.

As a child, her exposure to Mound Builder artwork or its meaning was limited, and she learned most of what she knows as an adult.

“Your art should be like this,” Deer said. “Don’t let anyone ever dictate to you, don’t ever give up, and don’t let anyone ever change your perspective. Don’t let anyone ever dictate to you. Your art should be like this.”

Many Indigenous designers, including Leslie Deer, use their tribe’s motifs and patterns in their apparel and accessories. (Photo by Christy Nicole Photography featuring Hauli Gray)

Deer works for Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s Cultural Heritage Center as the cultural activities coordinator, teaching classes on how to make accessories for regalia and everyday wear. She also hosts open cultural sewing classes. She encourages other Indigenous designers to push their brands forward and keep working, and reminds them of the time and commitment required to earn a living making their own clothes and accessories. However, the reward of seeing their work out in the world makes it worth it.

“I felt like it was something that I had a responsibility to bring forward with me, bring it into the present day just so that it’s not forgotten. I feel like I’m kind of bringing my ancestors along with me and bringing them into the present day and sharing what they did with everybody else,” Deer said.

Many of the Eastern Woodlands tribes, including Potawatomi, that worked and lived with French fur traders in the 1700s began using silk ribbons imported from France and creating ribbon applique as part of their everyday and ceremonial wear, such as ribbon skirts. Plains Cree tribal member Agnes Woodward designs ribbon skirts and made the outfit Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland wore for her swearing in ceremony in 2021.

Deer attended many Native art markets across the country to promote her line and sell her products, in addition to her website. While the prices across booths surprise some attendees, others understand the cost of purchasing handmade pieces. It takes Deer hours to put all of the fabric for many of her dresses, and in a recent Hownikan interview, she pointed out her hands touch every piece she sells.

“Keep working, and it takes them taking a closer look to really begin to realize that.”

“Have you ever put something on and just changed the way you feel when you put it on? You feel like you stand taller. You feel like it fits you right in the right places. You feel like it hangs right, and it just makes you feel important or special. And I think that’s what apparel can do for us,” she said.

One of the most rewarding aspects of Deer’s fashion career includes seeing a garment her new owner try it on for the first time.

“I like to explain to people looking at the apparel what the thought was with this garment, what the motifs represent, what I was thinking when I put this together. But the really fun thing is when people go into the dressing room and put it on and come out and look in the mirror. It’s like to see their faces sometimes, they just are like, ‘Whoa, I love this,’ or, ‘Oh, I want this. I got to have this,’ she said.

Deer hopes Native designers feel inspired by increased attention from outlets like Vogue as well as shows like Reservation Dogs and Busted Flat. “There’s just no end to the creativity of our Indigenous people. And every day there’s something new out there, and it’s just all so amazing and impressive and just beautiful,” she said.

Cost, worth

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“I think that people are really surprised sometimes when they take a closer look and realize how much effort, how much thought, how much of someone’s heart has gone into something as far as even just coordinating colors for things that you do and all of the symmetry in it,” she said. “All the representation that is put out in our artwork is, I think, surprising sometimes to people, and it takes them taking a closer look to really begin to realize that.”

Many Indigenous beadmaking artists make earrings, barrettes, necklaces and headbands not available anywhere else. As an apparel designer, Deer enjoys creating one-of-a-kind skirts and dresses and believes the exclusivity increases their worth.

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Find L.A. Deer Apparel online at ladeerapparel.com and on Instagram @ladeer.deer.
Philosophy inspires exploration, new ideas and curriculum

Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal member Preston Stovall began his studies at Montana State University, unsure of his path forward. He explored many different topics but found philosophy strung them all together.

“I wanted to consume knowledge; I just wanted to know things. I wanted to try to understand as much as I could, so I was taking classes all over the place. And I kept coming back to philosophy. … I felt as though there (were) sort of foundational roots that grow out of that discipline that maybe were a source for trying to get a handle on some of these other things,” Stovall said.

He graduated with his bachelor’s degree in philosophy from MSU in 2004 and then attended Texas A&M University, earning a master’s in philosophy and advanced international affairs in 2008. During that time, he also studied abroad at Oxford University in England. Finally, Stovall earned his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh in 2015.

He currently works as an assistant professor and postdoctoral researcher at the University of Hradec Králové and lives in the Czech Republic.

Travels

As the son of an Army soldier, the Bowles family descendant lived in Germany before the fall of the Berlin Wall and in Cairo, Egypt, during the first Gulf War in the early 90s. However, both sides of his family lived in Montana for a few generations, where the Stovalls eventually returned.

“I traveled a bunch as a kid, which was great. I really enjoyed the experience. And it’s one of the things that made it easier for me to come to the Czech Republic because I remember what it’s like being American overseas, and I think its good to get that experience,” he said.

After living in Kansas, Texas, Germany, New Jersey, Egypt, Washington, Montana, England, Texas (again) and Pennsylvania, Stovall accepted the opportunity as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Hradec Králové without hesitation. He has lived there since 2017.

“I jumped at the chance. It really looked like a good opportunity, and I knew some of the people here and the work they were doing. … So when they said they were interested in hiring me, basically said, ‘Well, I have my bag packed,’” he said.

Research

With specialties in metaphysics, the philosophy of mind, and the philosophy of language, Stovall attempts to understand human interaction and collective thinking on a deep level. He has worked since 2017 to apply his research to ideas concerning the social basis of rationality, and shared intentionality — the contextual meaning of thoughts/concepts themselves and the ability of humans to share mental states, respectively. In 2022, he published his first book on the topic, The Single-Minded Animal: Shared Intentionality, Normativity, and the Foundations of Discursive Cognition.

“(Shared intentionality is) characteristic of our form of life,” Stovall said. “By the first couple of days (after birth), we’re following emotions and eye-tracking. And by the first year, it’s developed into a fairly sophisticated capacity to share emotions and perceptual states and interests with other people.”

His most recent research project focuses on social media and its effect on the mental states and thinking of youth. Stovall serves as a program manager and instructor for a project titled Critical Thinking About Social Media at the Center for Science, Technology, Ethics, and Society at Montana State University.

“There’s good evidence to think that social media is responsible for the rise of rates of depression that we’re seeing among young people. … If you’re on the extreme end of social media use in terms of hours per week, but for young girls in particular, it looks like the rise we’re seeing in rates of depression and self-harm are influenced by social media use. Social media use also appears to be leading to an increase in political polarization, and it seems like we’re really got to get on top of this,” Stovall said.

Teaching

Next, Stovall plans to focus on teaching outside the university and his assistant professorship at the University of Hradec Králové. He has also spoken and led short courses at primary schools in Pennsylvania, Montana and the Czech Republic. He wants to help students develop critical thinking skills earlier in life.

During a recent Hownikan interview, Stovall quoted Socrates: “The unexamined life isn’t worth living.”

“I hope (my students) take an appreciation of the kinds of wonder and complexity that can be found in both the significant and the mundane,” he said. “And then, as a result, I hope they live a more examined life. … I think there’s something to be said for that. And I think that one of the things that philosophy can help inculcate is a sense of self-knowledge, self-reflection, examination.”

Stovall’s life has taken him around the globe and compelled him to study all levels of human thought, and he enjoys seeing where his journey leads him.

Find Preston Stovall’s work online at cpn.news/stovall.

Citizen Potawatomi Nation • Request for Ballot • 2022 Election

Name ___________________________ please print
Address ___________________________ State _____ Zip ________
City ___________________________ I reside within the boundaries of CPN Legislative District No. _____.

(Oklahoma residents should write Oklahoma in the blank above)

Under penalty of perjury, I hereby declare this to be my legal signature and Citizen Potawatomi Nation tribal roll number.

Signature ___________________________ Tribal Roll # _____

(If you do not know your roll number, call 800-860-9880 and ask for Tribal Rolls)

Must be postmarked no later than June 5, 2022

Mail to: Citizen Potawatomi Nation Election Committee
P.O. Box 310, Tecumseh, OK 74873-9900

Preston Stovall visits the Holy Hagia Sophia Grand Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey. (Photo provided)
District 7 election candidates

Incumbent - Mark Johnson

What was once considered a hard-fought right for Native Americans, that wasn’t necessarily solidified for us until the 1965 Voting Rights Act, has been twisted and turned by the national parties in such a way as to spread distrust in all voting systems. Fortunately, for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, we have had the ability for all voting age members to participate in our Tribal elections for years, with the ability to vote in-person in Shawnee or through absentee mail-in ballots. I believe it is each member’s responsibility to participate in our Tribal electoral process, it is your way to have your voice heard, and elect members who share the values that you find important for you. As a Tribal Legislators, I have had the opportunity to hear from a lot of members about our voting system, most like our system, and some take issue with it for one main reason, “I didn’t receive the ballot request form” which can almost always be traced back to not having your current address on file with the Tribe. In our highly mobile society, it is easy to forget to submit an address change form to the Tribal Rolls when you move. We also have members who are concerned with the visibility of their personal information on the outside of the ballot request postcard and the absentee ballots, which is understandable. The Tribal Legislature takes these concerns seriously and we have been working with the Election Committee on ways to remove these concerns and still conduct a secure and fair election, and I believe some common sense changes will be made in time for the 2023 Tribal election. Remember that you can always return these ballots and request forms to the Election Committee inside of a plain envelope if you wish, but you must make sure to fill in all requested information on the forms inside. We also can do a better job, in a transparent way, of explaining the election process to our members, both through the HooniKan and during our District meetings. It is also important that you share an email address with your District Legislator, so that you can be included in the “remember to request your ballot” emails that we all send out, plus all other important information that we can share.

Challenger - Browning Neddeau

Please discuss the importance of voting in Tribal elections and being actively involved in your district. Discuss various ways you think you could increase voter turnout and/or participation in Tribal events.

Voting has been a contentious subject for many people over the last few years. With voter turnout around 10% in District 7 in a normal year, we all need to do a better job reaching out to our members and keeping them engaged with the Tribe. I believe that most members are content with the direction of the Tribe and are happy with the benefits that are available to them. Unfortunately, this can also lead to those who are not bothered to vote which can lead to some real unintended consequences if too many don’t vote. The bottom line is that our Tribe doesn’t work without our members being actively engaged, we need you to take an active interest in our heritage, history, language, culture and the things that matter to you and your family. Plan a trip to the District Gathering this fall or the Family Heritage Festival and visit home. I am your elected representative to the legislature with continue to work towards providing the highest quality resources and benefits to you and your family.

Please discuss the importance of voting in Tribal elections and being actively involved in your district. Discuss various ways you think you could increase voter turnout and/or participation in Tribal events.

What was once considered a hard-fought right for Native Americans, that wasn’t necessarily solidified for us until the 1965 Voting Rights Act, has been twisted and turned by the national parties in such a way as to spread distrust in all voting systems. Fortunately, for the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, we have had the ability for all voting age members to participate in our Tribal elections for years, with the ability to vote in-person in Shawnee or through absentee mail-in ballots. I believe it is each member’s responsibility to participate in our Tribal electoral process, it is your way to have your voice heard, and elect members who share the values that you find important for you. As a Tribal Legislators, I have had the opportunity to hear from a lot of members about our voting system, most like our system, and some take issue with it for one main reason, “I didn’t receive the ballot request form” which can almost always be traced back to not having your current address on file with the Tribe. In our highly mobile society, it is easy to forget to submit an address change form to the Tribal Rolls when you move. We also have members who are concerned with the visibility of their personal information on the outside of the ballot request postcard and the absentee ballots, which is understandable. The Tribal Legislature takes these concerns seriously and we have been working with the Election Committee on ways to remove these concerns and still conduct a secure and fair election, and I believe some common sense changes will be made in time for the 2023 Tribal election. Remember that you can always return these ballots and request forms to the Election Committee inside of a plain envelope if you wish, but you must make sure to fill in all requested information on the forms inside. We also can do a better job, in a transparent way, of explaining the election process to our members, both through the HooniKan and during our District meetings. It is also important that you share an email address with your District Legislator, so that you can be included in the “remember to request your ballot” emails that we all send out, plus all other important information that we can share.

Challenger - Browning Neddeau

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2022 FAMILY REUNION FESTIVAL
JUNE 24 - 26, 2022

MAY 2022
Meet foster care parents Brit and Amber Hembree

When it comes to caring for area foster children, one Shawnee, Oklahoma, family makes community the priority. Brit and Amber Hembree provide guidance and support for children in their greatest time of need as foster parents through Citizen Potawatomi Nation’s FireLodge Children and Family Services.

FireLodge serves as a local community resource for confidential services geared toward youth and families. They place an emphasis on Native Americans to enhance, enrich and develop cultural awareness in the areas of health and wellness.

“Foster parents play a critical role in the Indian Child Welfare team,” said CPN Foster Care/Adoption Manager Kendra Lowden. “Not only are they providing physical care for Potawatomi children, they also show them love and nurturance while encouraging the relationships with important people in their lives.”

The Hembrees both grew up in the area and have long-term ties to the community. Brit is a Tribal member and descendent of the Opey family. Amber is an elementary school teacher and library media specialist.

When her friends went out of town a few years ago, Amber agreed to babysit their foster child. The experience lead her to consider whether her own family could give back in the same way.

“I just kind of had a feeling of, ‘Okay, I think we can do more,’” she said. Amber also had a personal experience with foster care that made an impression on her. When she was younger, her family took in younger relatives who had tragically lost both parents in a short amount of time.

Amber’s friend and neighbor encouraged her to reach out to Lowden, and she started the process to become a foster parent in 2020.

“That first conversation is important so that foster parents are educated about the process as well as how the child welfare system operates,” Lowden said. “(The friends) just really spoke highly of CPN and the way they do things and their caseworkers,” Amber said. “We started the process and got our first placement in 2020.”

The start of the coronavirus pandemic nearly upended these plans with the Hembrees receiving their first foster care placement the same week pandemic closures began. They found a way to make everything work.

“We took in a 4-year-old and a 5-year-old that spring break week. I think it was March 18,” Amber said. “And then two days later, we found out schools were closed, daycare were closed, everything. So that was a very challenging five months, honestly.”

While the Hembree family cared for the two children’s day-to-day needs, the children’s biological mother successfully completed all the court’s requirements, and the children returned home.

“They went back to mom, and mom is doing amazing,” Amber said. “We went and saw them in January, so we still keep in contact with them.”

During the visitation restrictions due to the pandemic were difficult for the children, Amber and Hembree said they empathized with what the family was experiencing.

“Whatever happened, happened in her past before we knew her, but now those kids are her life, and she is doing wonderful,” she said. Lowden said the Hembrees’ strong support of family, cultural and community ties make them great foster parents.

“They are very connected to the Potawatomi community and know the importance of cultural and family connections for their foster children,” Lowden said. “They have gone above and beyond to make sure all of their foster children have extra time to visit their parents, whether in person or virtually. This extra effort they make helps the children keep a strong relationship with their families.”

Near the end of 2021, the Hembree family was able to accept another placement for a 5-year-old boy. The child quickly adapted to the family’s routine from school to recreational activities, like camping.

For someone considering whether to foster, Amber advises the experience is rewarding despite the inevitable bumps.

She suggests having measured expectations and to prepare for both highs and lows.

“It is challenging and everybody told me that, and I said, ‘I know it’s going to be, but you don’t really know until you’re actually living it,’” she said. “Just go in with realistic expectations.”

Amber relies on her spiritual faith to weather the storms.

“I think people need patience and grace, mercy and prayer,” she said. “Sometimes people hear foster care and people talking about being a foster family, it’s kind of like there’s some excitement and you think, ‘Oh, that’d be really neat.’ But (there are times when) it’s hard.”

Amber added that respite care is another option for someone who is unsure they will be able to keep up with full-time foster care. Respite care is offered so the full-time caregiver can take a break.

“It’s a great way to still help and contribute to the lives of children in foster care if full-time foster care isn’t something that a family is comfortable with or can’t do at the time,” she said. Amber said staff at CPN have always been supportive and responsive.

“Kendra has always been very quick, if I have questions, to get back with me.” Hembree said. “She’s just very easy to visit with about stuff.”

She said the consistency of having the same caseworker for the entire placement has made the process much easier for her family, something that high staff turnover and other agencies make impossible.

“I’m in a Facebook group of (foster parents), and they say, ‘We’ve had three different caseworkers in the last six months.’” Amber said. “So, it’s nice to have one caseworker the whole time.”

Despite the challenges, she finds the positive impact on young people in the community one of the most rewarding parts of the experience.

“I think being able to show them (support in) what is a really dark time and to know what it’s like to have someone that really cares about them during those times that are hard,” she said.

Amber has become more optimistic about child welfare after seeing the efficiency of CPN’s Tribal court system. It lays out its expectations and makes sure parents understand their obligations, she said.

“(The biological mother) was doing everything she was supposed to be doing,” Amber said. “We were taking those kids to the visit and seeing that the system is working the way it’s supposed to, which is how things are trying, which is wonderful.”

Hembree also appreciates the chance to stay in contact with the families she has met and relishes seeing the positive changes in their lives.

“Being able to build the relationship and keep it, I really enjoy still being able to go see (the children),” Amber said. “Being able to communicate with them and see how well they’re doing. And just to know that we helped by being able to take care of them while mom was trying to get back on track. That’s what it makes it worthwhile.”

Lowden said the entire Hembree family has played a role in serving area children, and that commitment means more family reunifications are possible.

“Brit and Amber’s children have been amazing siblings and helped children feel welcome and loved,” Lowden said. “Brit and Amber opened their home with the intention to support children’s relationships with their birth families, and they have been very successful in doing so. I have loved getting to know their family the past two years and feel very blessed to have people such as them to care for children in their most vulnerable time.”

Lowden said families consider helping FireLodge.

“We love to answer questions and get to know more about the families who are deciding to open their hearts and homes to children in need,” Lowden said. “To be a foster parent, you must live in Oklahoma and be willing to support the reunification of children to their families.”

Lowden said there is a desperate need right now for families willing to adopt older children and large sibling sets.

For more information about FireLodge Children and Family Services, call 405-273-3121 or visit cpnnews/FireLodge or Facebook. h

HOWNIKAN

OVERDOSE AWARENESS COMMUNITY EVENT

MAY 19 | 6-8PM | CULTURAL HERITAGE CENTER

PLEASE JOIN US AND HELP SAVE LIVES!
Keeping the lights on

With three grocery stores, two casinos, two health care clinics, several restaurants, and many other enterprises and services, Citizen Potawatomi Nation always looks for ways to improve its electrical system and reduce power consumption.

CPN tribal member and Toupin family descendant Justin Whitecotton leads the electrical department as its director, and each day brings new challenges and exciting opportunities.

“I have like four pages of to-do things sitting on my desk,” he said and laughed.

“It’s never boring. It’s always something, and it’s really fulfilling to be involved and have a lot of input in the way things go.”

Whitecotton has seen the Tribe expand and grow since he began as the director in 2019. Projects include constructing Iron Horse Industrial Park, improving outdoor lighting at CPN businesses and adding an electrical substation. He enjoys seeing a bit of everything in one job.

“We’re always looking for better ways to do things. Keeping up with the construction projects and improving a few parking lot light projects to adding generators. We do everything electrical, from light bulbs to the substation,” Whitecotton said.

Family to foreman

Growing up in Shawnee, Oklahoma, he began helping his father at 10 years old at residential construction sites. He owned his own electrical contracting company and mainly worked on houses. Whitecotton attended college for a brief period after graduating from Shawnee High School in 1995 but decided he wanted to work as an electrician as well.

Since then, he has followed jobs across the country for different businesses and owned his own company, Whitecotton Electrical. He has worked on the Grand Casino Hotel & Resort, wired industrial sites and much more.

“I did learn a lot from my dad about not just life lessons, but how to operate a successful business and some of that stuff, which has helped me a lot here. Because there’s really not a lot I haven’t seen,” Whitecotton said.

He learned everything on the job. His knowledge outpaced his father’s as he expanded his experience as a young professional, and Whitecotton taught him more when they worked together again in Whitecotton’s late 20s.

After living in Washington state, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and other parts of the country, returning to his hometown came at an unexpected time. He saw it as an excellent opportunity to lead the Tribe and help improve its self-sufficiency.

“Being from Shawnee, being a Tribal member, I was very familiar. Actually, my company did some contracting work for CPN, even before, like the corner store, Whitecotton said. “I wed all that — the police station, the eagle aviary, some of the buildings at the golf course, the sushi restaurant, the Grand. So I was fairly familiar with the workings,” Whitecotton said.

The department has focused on conserving energy and saving the Tribe money through rebate programs throughout the last three years. The work has resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars in savings for CPN. One project in 2020 included changing hundreds of outdoor lights at CPN businesses. The lamps shine brighter, last longer and consume less electricity.

“Our one of the most rewarding jobs of his career — updating and improving the lighting in the neonatal care unit.”

“‘I had to move all the newborns out one time to run some pipe and wire through the viewing area,’” Whitecotton said. “‘And seeing all that, especially kids that have health problems and stuff, and you’re working on something that really meant a lot to them, to their families. It seemed a little more important than just wiring an office building or something like that.”

He finds providing an essential resource to many different types of businesses throughout his career rewarding, and he enjoys helping CPN’s more than 2,000 employees function on a day-to-day basis.

“We’d like to keep it that way, if we can keep things working and stay unobtrusive and just let everybody else do their job. And that way there’s no issues, no power loss, no lights out,” he said.

Whitecotton looks forward to new challenges in the future, as Citizen Potawatomi Nation expands and continues construction on healthcare facilities, offices and more.

Language update

By Justin Neely, CPN Language Department Director

Bachje jyrek (Hello everyone).

It’s a busy time in the Language Department. We are getting geared up for the upcoming Family Reunion Festival. We are excited to finally get to see some of our relations after a very long but necessary break. Our drum group Sŋego Sliktwe — Squirrel Creek Singers — have been practicing hard to be able to do not only our annual hand games but also do some of the songs at our annual dance. We also have been doing an intermediate language class every Monday and Thursday at 1 p.m. We are also recording the classes and doing them on Zoom.

We are also working with Google on a new program called Woollaroos. The way this program works is you capture an image with your phone such as a tree. Then the program says the name for tree. With the initial offering, Google is going with about five or six languages. Potawatomi is one of these languages. I was given a list of the top 1,200 or so words that Google has. Then once I translate these words, I will have to record the audio for these words.

We are also continuing work on a series of kids’ books. The first couple will be given out in the Festival bags. We will be putting out a web address to put your name down for books, and then we will then send the books out in bulk, three to five at a time, in order to keep costs down. When we are all said and done, we look to put out 12 different children’s books.

Our online dictionary recently passed the 10,000 word mark. If you haven’t had a chance to check it out, please do at potawatomidictionary.com.

We have close to 70 percent of words with audio files and a number with images and even video clips on some words. You can also print out the dictionary in English to Potawatomi and Potawatomi to English.

We are wrapping up the second semester of our high school course. We have been redesigning the online course on a new learning management system platform, Tovun. We are also wrapping up our first year of offering a 9-week Potawatomi class at Shawnee Middle School. Once we finish this, we will begin working on a new beginner adult course and then intermediate course to replace the courses we have on Moodle. We also still have our Moodle course, which is still going, and two different courses on memrise.com. We are also partnering with the CPN Department of Education to create a collegiate course that we hope to be able to roll out this coming fall.

We also have been working on a number of videos we have been posting on our two YouTube channels — one geared towards adult learners and one geared towards kids. We just wrapped up the first episode of The Beverly Hillbillies. Whenever we make a public domain film, we make three versions: one with no captions, one with captions in Potawatomi and one with captions in English. Check our two channels for tons of Potawatomi language content: cpn-news/IN and cpn-news/children

In (End).
Reducing stigma in mental health treatment

Psychologist and licensed alcohol and drug counselor Dr. Julio Rojas is an advocate for his patients, and even more so when social stigma surrounds getting help for mental health.

“I think stigma is the way we view a person as less than or unworthy simply because of who they are, a condition they have or a circumstance in life,” he said.

**Stigma exists everywhere**

Reducing the stigma surrounding mental health treatment is necessary to encourage people to seek treatment for themselves, Rojas said. Patients who seek help for their problems may immediately face judgment or bias, even from the medical community.

“They might say, ‘I’ve struggled with addiction,’ and then the provider might pivot with that one word and warn them that they better never try to get pain medicines from them,” he said.

If patients experience this type of reaction when they identify as being in recovery, or as someone who struggles with alcoholism or addiction, the patient’s trust can begin to erode.

Patients who do not trust their provider are less likely to seek recovery for their problems, he said. This can also lead to patients losing hope that there is a solution to the problem. Rojas recalled a patient who came in to get treatment, and continually apologized:

“’I bet he told me ‘I’m sorry’ about 25 times. I said, ‘What are you sorry for?’ He said, ‘I’m sorry that I’m taking up your time. I’m sorry that my life is a mess.’ If he saw a physician, he probably never says, ‘I’m sorry, I have diabetes. I’m sorry, I have cardiovascular disease,’ but he’s been told by society that when you’re someone who struggles with drug addiction, you’re weak. You’re selfish. And unfortunately, before he developed the problem, he probably believed a lot of the things that society had taught him to believe,” Rojas said.

Fortunately, the patient took the first step by coming in for treatment. Rojas said he received the help he needed, but it was an example of how stigma hurts: a person’s self-esteem and their ability to say, “I need help.” When patients don’t feel comfortable reaching out, they may become more isolated, which is very harmful for people with addiction or other mental health diagnoses.

Rojas said the problem is worse within communities that are already marginalized due to their race, socioeconomic status or disability.

“For example, if someone is a racial or ethnic minority and a member of the LGBTQ+ community, they can face compounded stigma, he said.

**Compounded stigma can be defined as the additive or cumulative impact of being a member of one, or several, marginalized groups (e.g., racial/ethnic minority, LGBTQ+) and suffering from addiction, mental illness, and/or trauma, Rojas said. Each of these identifications carries its own stigma, therefore, it is a heavier burden to the person’s health and wellness. More importantly, it negatively impacts their ability to seek help, trust others, and care for their physical and mental health and well-being, he said.

**Helping loved ones**

If people have a family member or loved one who needs mental health assistance, they should first set aside any bias they may have before starting a conversation, Rojas said.

“What do you think about someone with alcoholism? Why do you think what you think, and is that a helpful way to treat sick people? Is that a helpful way to talk to someone who’s hurting?” he asked.

Rojas also urges people to talk to someone who found success in recovery.

“There are a bunch of people who are successful in recovery, and they’re happy to tell you about their journey,” he said. “If you or family members who are in recovery can be more open about that, and talk about getting counseling and getting help, then that’s a sign of strength.”

Rojas also recommends reading books that emphasize the importance of kindness when talking to a loved one who suffers from addiction. One of his favorites is Beyond Addiction: How Science and Kindness Help People Change.

“How can we love people who are hurting and at the same time, help them get better?” he asked. “Sometimes we get angry about the behaviors of someone who’s using, or we get angry about feeling helpless to convince them or change them. In that frustration, we draw from our uglier side, a hurtful side.”

Rojas also urges people to focus on something other than addiction. A single conversation about something positive could be the catalyst that helps the person seek treatment.

“I’ve talked to many parents who have lost their children to addiction, and the common regret they have is that’s all they talked about,” Rojas said. “They didn’t talk about the goals that person had. Who knows how a conversation about a goal or a dream might turn into the first step towards sobriety?”

While Rojas does not currently treat children or teens, he still encourages parents to create open and honest communication about any family history of addiction or substance abuse.

“Family history itself doesn’t mean it’s going to happen. But if you have family history and then these problems come up later, you can talk about it,” Rojas said.

He said parents can look for opportunities to talk with children about mental health, such as when a high-profile person like a celebrity or athlete mentions it. He is hopeful parents will begin to think about behavioral health in the same way they think about a visit to the dentist or their primary care doctor.

**Stakes are high but help is there**

Rojas hopes people will push through any doubts they might have about seeking help.

“When I’m sitting with a person, I know all the obstacles they had to overcome just to sit there in that moment. For some of them, it’s taken five or 10 years just to sit in that chair,” he said. “When I think about it from that perspective, I don’t want to miss the opportunity to talk about hope, to talk about healing, to talk about possibility.”

Rojas said since the stakes are often high, affecting every aspect of a person’s life, this can be another barrier to seeking help.

“If you have mental illness, you may lose custody of your children. You may lose your civil liberty. There is a reason for that stigmatization because we as a society do things to folks with mental illness, and it’s usually not helpful,” he said.

Rojas said some of his patients have even denied life insurance because of mental illness, have lost jobs or have been denied the opportunity to serve in the military.

Fortunately, many treatment options have shifted away from blaming the person seeking help, Rojas said. In the 1990s, patients were told they were reckless, dangerous or selfish for their addiction. This harsh approach is counterproductive, he said, and can push the patient away rather than draw them toward help.

He is also encouraged by the approach of treating all of a patient’s needs at once, rather than one at a time. Patients were told to maintain sobriety for one year before being treated for other issues. This method failed to acknowledge that the patient may have first started abusing substances to self-medicate depression, anxiety or other disorders. This resulted in fewer patients maintaining sobriety for a year.

Rojas said an integrated approach is the best way to treat the person by addressing issues that contribute to the patient’s risk of going back to using.

Above all, Rojas wants to encourage people to push through barriers and reach out for help.

“If you have struggled with picking up the phone or talking to someone about what’s going on in your mind and heart, what I would encourage is to resist the messages that our society has communicated: You’re not defective. You’re worthy. You can get better. There is help, there are people who want to help you,” he said.

For more information about CPN Behavioral Health Services, visit cpn.news/bh or call 405-214-5101.
Community events value human connections and relationships which build collective fanning of flames that keep our Potawatomi fire burning bright for the next seven generations.
Margaret Zientek named Workforce and Social services director

With her attention always on the needs of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation and its members, Margaret Zientek has already hit the ground running as the new Workforce and Social Services department director.

“It’s wide open as to how far we can expand employment, training and related programs,” Zientek said. “I’m really excited where that could lead us. Taking on something brand new means you learn something brand new.”

The department’s previous director, Carol Clay-Levi, retired October 2021.

“I feel that we’re grown, and we continue to grow,” Zientek said. “Some of those achievements that Carol and I have been able to make happen or have been an instrumental part in those changes nationally, are coming to fruition.”

Zientek is ready to meet the challenges that can accompany growth.

Improving how services are delivered

That includes the effort to renegotiate the memorandum of agreement on Public Law 102-477. The federal legislation gives federally recognized tribes “the authority to integrate Federal employment, training and related programs that they provide to tribal members,” according to HIA pow. However, tribal nations did not have an opportunity to provide input on the 2017 memorandum of agreement, resulting in re-implementation of many harmful practices that the tribes had originally sought to fix.

In remarks to the National Congress of American Indians 2021 general assembly, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris announced tribal governments would have a place at the table during the renegotiation process, the December 2021 Hownikan reported.

“This year, some of the things that we have been fighting for, advocating for and working hard to make happen on a national level are coming to a head,” Zientek said. “We have been advocating and working to get that (MOA) corrected. It’s in the formation stage of how that will happen right now.”

She said the department considers how it can meet various needs from support for veterans, to encouraging safe and healthy families. Tribal workforce leaders like Zientek believe some changes are needed at the federal level.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, or LIHEAP, helps with residential winter heating and summer cooling costs. The program also includes an education component and weatherization. However, federal restrictions can sometimes complicate program administration.

“Our viewpoint is it’s the same people we’re serving with all of our workforce and social services. Why do I have to manage it separately?” she asked. “I can’t pay (employees) to do other jobs with other federal funds, when in actuality, they’re serving the same set of clients. We believe it makes sense at the Tribe that LIHEAP be included in 477.”

Zientek also identified another area that needs federal changes. When she and her staff noticed more clients with a history of felony convictions, they sought to expand the program.

“They are a client that needs an intensive service. They need more help to get on their feet and get jobs. We’re one of the few tribes in the nation that modeled our reentry connected to getting a job,” she said. “We expanded it, and we successfully received that grant within 477. We will be advocating it stays in 477 for us.”

Zientek also works to ensure the programs her department offers are ready to respond to the changing employment market in Oklahoma. Oklahoma’s growing cannabis industry has impacted some traditional service markets, such as retail and food service. People who are reluctant to work in those roles are rethinking their options, she said.

“I’m hoping to find more people willing to get that retraining or get their foot in their door at this great, wonderful new opportunity and to recognize it’s there,” she said. “I hope to help put that in more people’s thoughts, that they can be proud of what they did.”

Serving the community

Zientek and her staff also take time to celebrate the successes they’ve experienced. They just held their fourth annual community baby shower. More than 800 people attended this year’s event.

“This was a community event; it wasn’t just Citizen Potawatomi,” she said. Partner agencies included the Absentee Shawnee Tribe, Legacy Parenting, the Oklahoma Department of Human Services and others. More than 30 vendors set up booths.

“The people who attended and the agencies who participated are already saying ‘Put me down for next year’ and asking ‘Where are we going to hold it next time?’”

Investing in future Tribal leaders

Outside of Workforce and Social Services, one of Zientek’s favorite Tribal programs is the Potawatomi Leadership Program. It was born after Chairman John “Rocky” Barrett and Vice-Chairman Linda Capps thought the Nation could do more to develop the next generation of Potawatomi leaders.

The PLP is held for six weeks in late June, during the Family Reunion Festival. The program selects eight to 10 Tribal members from around the country, bringing them to Shawnee to learn about CPN government, culture and economic development.

The participants stay at the Sharp House, a CPN property close to Tribal headquarters. Zientek jokes that she was not paying attention in a meeting when the need for a PLP housemother was being discussed, and then she was nominated for the position. She has been the housemother for about 15 years.

She said the experience shows participants how the Nation’s government works, how it provides vital services and CPN’s rich history.

“If you’re interested, you can come back and work (here). Take this knowledge back to your family and share it,” she said. “We have legislative meetings across the country. Come to your meeting, come to your regional meeting, but you now know what it is that we do and why we do it. And help us share that.”

She enjoys getting to know all the program participants while they’re in Shawnee and hearing updates from them after they’ve returned home.

“Those kids each year had something unique to speak about it,” she said. “I always enjoy visiting with the youth. I always have learned something new that I didn’t know or experience something.”

With her unique perspective, Zientek is looking forward to serving CPN as it continues its growth and helping youth prepare to lead the Nation in the coming years.

Learn more about Workforce and Social Services at cpn.news/workforce.

Read information and apply for the Potawatomi Leadership Program at plp.potawatomi.org.

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Citizen Potawatomi Nation Director of Self-Governance Kasie Nichols recently passed the credentialing exam to become a Certified Grants Management Specialist through the National Grants Management Association. The association selected Nichols as one of seven CGMS holders to serve on the newly created National Grants Management Association Certification Council, which oversees and manages the CGMS credential program.

CGMS

The CGMS credential is comprehensive in scope, requiring mastery over the entire lifecycle of grants management from seeking out funds to closeout. “I’d never heard of anything that really tested the knowledge of that complete lifecycle, and in a credentialed way,” Nichols said. She is one of approximately 200 people who have earned the CGMS credential. “It was not easy,” she said. “Before I passed the test, I cracked open the book and thought, ‘If anybody passed this test, they really do have to be an expert in all things federal awards,’ because it is a lot of detail, and it is all on the test. It was overwhelming.”

The credential and council position are high honors, designating Nichols as one of the top experts in her field. She believes they bring distinctions for the Tribe as well.

In a recent interview, Nichols told the Hownikan that members of the NGMA and people pursuing the CGMS credential run the gamut of grants professionals, from federal officials and local nonprofit organizations to educational institutions and hospitals. “Unfortunately, I get the sense that tribes are often unnoticed, probably due to the historic paternalistic relationship with the federal government,” she said. “We’re often underestimated as maybe not knowing as much as other forms of government, despite a lot of evidence to the contrary. We do everything that so many do, if not more.”

Nichols said she sees this kind of outlook not only in grants management but across professions. It is a pattern that bears witness to a century of policy change between the U.S. federal government and tribes in North America.

History

Tribal reliance on grant funding follows from a long history of U.S. federal policy towards tribes throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The United States believed Natives lacked the ability to manage their own affairs. Euro-American reformers took it upon themselves to be the stewards and arbiters of the so-called “civilization” of Native tribes.

In the late 1800s, the U.S. federal government began moving towards allotment as a general policy for relations with Native tribes. The Citizen Potawatomi were an early test case for this policy after signing the Treaty of 1861; the Dawes Act of 1887 made allotment the rule of law. By dividing land held in common and conferring U.S. citizenship on Native individuals through these policies, the federal government sought to disintegrate tribalism and assimilate Native people into the dominant Euro-American social order.

Francis Paul Prucha writes in *The Great Father: the United States Government and the American Indians* that throughout the first few decades of the 20th century, the U.S. federal government greatly increased their bureaucratic interference in every aspect of tribal affairs in an attempt to conform them to their idea of effective social and economic models. As the federal government felt the strain of such extensive management, and as it became evident that the desired “disappearance” of Native peoples into dominant society was not coming about, policy changed. The 1934 Indian Reorganization Act resulted in a return to tribal self-governance across North America. The Citizen Potawatomi Nation adopted its constitution in accordance with this policy change in 1936.

However, another period of anti-tribalism followed in the 1940s-60s, known as the Termination Era, when the United States reversed self-governance policies. Activism of the Civil Rights Era contributed to yet another policy swing in the direction of tribal self-governance, this time in the form of the Indian Self-Determination Education and Assistance Act of 1975. The ISDEAA laid out provisions for tribal governments to have more control over the administration of federal services and programs to their citizens through contracts formed with the federal government. These contracts essentially sourced employment within the federal programs to the tribes themselves, but the programs were still heavily regulated by federal requirements and funding. An amendment to the ISDEAA in 1994 authorized a new way to administer federal programs to tribes — compacts with federal agencies. These compacts allow tribes to assume funding of, and control over, some federal programs, services, functions, or activities (PSFAs) that the DOI (Department of the Interior) otherwise would provide directly to tribes, “as outlined in a 2021 Congressional Research Service report.”

Though policy cycled throughout the 20th century between intense government management and anti-tribalism on the one hand, and tribal self-governance on the other, critics note that self-governance has never entirely been on the tribes’ own terms. Programs and policies are still subject to federal oversight and held to Euro-American standards of society and economy — a lingering paternalism and power imbalance that impact tribes throughout the U.S. today.

Grants and Self-Governance

CPN seeks to achieve self-sufficiency and sovereignty in every area. The Office of Self-Governance works to help the Tribe secure the resources needed to manage its own affairs. Self-Governance staff facilitates the Tribe’s contracts and compacts with the federal government, as well as expands compacts to new areas and programs and secures grant funding as needed. Grants are a critical element in the Tribe’s ability to administer its services and expand its self-sufficiency. Even with expanded provisions for tribal self-governance under the 1994 ISDEEA amendment, the funding available through compacts remains insufficient. Other programs, like CPN’s social service and justice programs, are not eligible for compact at all.

Most recently, the Tribe received a $2 million grant from the U.S. Indian Health Service to expand the CPN Behavioral Health Department. Nichols said her office is currently evaluating a second round of facility funding from the IHS and will soon submit proposals for a Native American language grant and a justice program grant. From emergency management to economic development projects, grant funding plays a crucial role in the independence Citizen Potawatomi Nation has built. Nichols and the entire staff in the Office of Self-Governance work to compile the best balance of compacts, contracts and grants to continue to develop the Tribe’s self-sufficiency and stability for generations to come.

Despite the comprehensive expertise CPN and other tribes have developed through many decades of navigating the complex web of relations between tribes and the federal government, Nichols said that tribes remain vastly underestimated by their peers and the federal government regarding grants management.

“There’s an under-appreciation for what tribes can do, how our relationship really should work as a partnership and not as a kind of paternalistic relationship, because we really are capable and competent enough to do the work to benefit our Tribal citizens,” Nichols said.

In achieving the CGMS credential, a prestigious and rare accomplishment, Nichols has gained for the Tribe a formal recognition of its extensive knowledge and capability.

“It really puts us on par with other grant professionals,” she said, whether that be colleagues from the federal government, institutions of higher education, or state or local governments. “We’re on the same level, and we do share as much knowledge as they do.”

Nichols hopes more people learn about the CGMS program through the NGMA and pursue the credential, especially tribal professionals or members. She is excited to see how her credential and new role on the oversight council helps advance CPN and all of Indian Country.

Find out more about the National Grant Managements Association at ngma.org.
For the 33rd consecutive year, the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Accounting Department received the Government Finance Officers Association’s Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the fiscal year that ended September 30, 2020.

The prestigious award honors governments that achieve excellence in financial reporting through comprehensive and transparent accounting practices, according to the GFOA. The organization honored the Nation’s annual financial report again.

The achievement speaks volumes for the Tribe, and the Native community,” Logsdon said. “I’m honored that trust has been put upon me to represent our Nation community.” Logsdon said.

"It think I’m excited because Native Americans and low-income individuals” she asked.

Other CPN leaders previously served on the board, including Vice-Chairman Linda Capps, and Logsdon considers her nomination to the same committee an honor. More than anything, she looks forward to learning from her peers’ experiences and applying those lessons at the CPCDC.

"I want to leave this place at a better spot than when I found it,” Logsdon said. She began working with the CPCDC as its second employee in 2003. She oversees the organization’s services, including credit counseling, assistance buying a home, financing a business and providing access to federal CDFI programs.

Read more about her appointment to the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City at cpcdc.org and on Facebook.
New program puts students on technical school fast track

The U.S. Department of Education awards millions of dollars for the Native American Career and Technical Education Program each year. In 2021, Citizen Potawatomi Nation received funds as one of 39 federally recognized tribes, tribal organizations and Bureau of Indian Affairs-funded schools to advance educational and career opportunities for Indigenous peoples and their communities.

CPN Workforce and Social Services career advisors Norma Neely and Nicole Byrd assist program participants with everything from selecting a major to finding a position after graduation.

“We don’t provide a handout; we provide a hand up,” Byrd said. “And I’ve kind of told myself that motto every time I do anything with any client is just, ‘I’m giving them a hand up. This is helping them to create a better future for not only themselves but our community as a whole.’”

Using NACTEP funds, Workforce and Social Services pays participants to attend specific programs at technical institutes or vocational schools in the department’s six-county jurisdiction. They have agreements with Metro Technology Centers, Gordon Cooper Technology Center and Moore Norman Technology Center. Native Americans of any tribe who reside in Lincoln, Payne, Cleveland, Seminole, Pottawatomie or Oklahoma counties qualify to apply.

“The uniqueness of this program comes from the fact that this is very technical centers. And we’re really putting a focus on boosting Native population in the technical centers. Each of the technical centers that we’ve talked to has a very, very small Native population,” Byrd said.

Following thorough research, the department selected a limited number of high-paying, high-field jobs to support at each school. Those include aircraft mechanics and service technicians, radiologic technologies, heat and air, refrigeration, machinists, computer user support specialists, physical therapy assistants, licensed practical nursing and others. The research focused on anticipated demand in the next five to 10 years and the communities’ need to fill those positions.

“We really want them in careers,” Neely said. “We don’t want them just to get a job. We want it to be something that will enable their family to live nicely. … And when you look at the programs that are offered, the approved programs, you’re going to see, there are ones that have a starting salary of at least $17.40 an hour,” with the potential to increase in the next five years.

Currently, popular programs include aircraft mechanics, licensed practical nursing and CNC small machinery, many of which lack diversity. The program’s clients range from 17 to 40, and concurrent enrollment is available for those completing their high school diploma.

“We have one high school student who I believe is almost on Gordon Cooper’s campus all day,” Byrd said. “He is a senior in high school, and I believe he finished almost all of his course requirements for high school. He’s working through his courses at Gordon Cooper really fast, faster than most high school students do.”

While Workforce clients attend classes and other program obligations, the department pays them minimum wage for their time in school. Byrd and Neely see it as an opportunity to help overcome a significant barrier that prevents people from earning a certification to obtain a better job and increase their pay.

“A lot of the times, this wouldn’t be an option for people because they would have to work full time in order to support their families. But this kind of gives them a reprieve where they don’t have to worry about money so much. They can just focus on school,” Byrd said.

“It’s a little bit shocking, I think, whenever we tell people that, ‘Yeah, we’re going to pay you to go to school.’ And I think everybody just thinks, ‘Wow, this is amazing.’”

If a Pell grant or other type of funding covers tuition, the NACTEP and Workforce help their clients in various other ways. That includes money for books, supplies, childcare, gas vouchers, tools and necessary clothing.

“We’re really excited that we get people that think, ‘Oh, gosh, I really couldn’t go anywhere. I’m just going to have to make it, get by. I really can’t have a career because … I’m a single mom, and I’ve got kids. And how could I do this?’ Well, that’s where Workforce comes in handy,” Neely said.

She and Byrd agree they see no downsides to the program or applying — only possibility.

“No excuses. If you really want to have a career that will lead to a real fulfilling life, here’s your chance to do it. Work hard. Get this done. We can help you,” Neely said.

Visit the Workforce and Social Service Department webpage at cpn.navajo/airline. Find out more information about the Native American Career and Technical Education Program by emailing Nicole Byrd at nicole.byrd@potawatomi.org or call 405-878-3854.
Being and doing Potawatomi

By Kevin Roberts, Bertrand family descendant

Bodewadmi Ndaaw (Im Potawatomi)

Some of you may recall the 1979 Steve Martin movie, The Jerk. There is a scene in the movie where he has just received the new phone book. He exclaims, “The new phone books are here, and there I am,” pointing to his name. He states, “Now I’m somebody!” I share this as a related reference for the purpose of this topic. I remember as a young boy how excited I was when my mother explained to me that we were Potawatomi. I remember my excitement years later when I received my Tribal ID card in 1989. It was official! I had a card that stated I was Potawatomi although I had known that for some time prior. However, I would share this information with all who would listen, “I am Potawatomi!” Most asked, “So what does that mean exactly?” What does it mean to be Potawatomi? Great question and one that has taken me on a terrific journey these past 30-plus years. A journey requiring dedication, self-awareness, a sincere commitment to learning and research, an appreciation of perspectives, establishing and nurturing relationships, and simply freeing myself from the years of conforming and normalizing with today’s societal boundaries.

I am committed to our Bodewadmi Ndaaw (Potawatomi language). I have been studying for it and years for understanding and appreciation through our outstanding Language Department in Shawnee, Oklahoma, headed up by Director Justin Neely. Most, if not all, have been remote learning since I reside in Illinois, and the online access is very much appreciated. We are fortunate as a Tribal nation to have Justin Neely and his team. Justin, along with Robert Collins, have both been instrumental in my journey. I appreciate the mentorship and friendship that has evolved. Both have taught me an absolute fact about our language. Our language is the bedrock of our people, culture and traditions. I realized early in my journey that I was acquiring unexpected knowledge about our culture, traditions and our connection to Segnēwē (Mother Earth), and Māmagnōwan (The Creator), and our sacred medicines Sėma, Kishki, Wāhekahiy, Wipēnishiṣu, and everything in between. Most things in nature are considered animate or alive. With this concept, you really appreciate what was important to our ancestors and how they viewed the earth as sacred. Our ancestors saw the earth and all its creations as relatives. Not better or higher on the food chain but as equals. If a tree is treated in the same manner as a person, and likewise a grasshopper or deer is treated just like a person, it changes your perspective. Often I have read or heard our elders refer to “my brother the bear” or “my sister the river.”

Where I am on my journey at present didn’t happen overnight. Understanding what it means to be Potawatomi didn’t happen when my mom shared with me that I was Potawatomi or when I received my Tribal ID card. It is a journey we all must take. The Potawatomi teachings and understanding that I continue to evolve have been so important and freeing for me. I have been able to fill voids I have experienced in my life’s journey, grasp thoughts and beliefs I hold with better understanding and appreciation through the knowledge I have acquired and my doing. I honestly believe after 62 years, I have finally freed the Potawatomi that has always been within me.

In a recent class I was able to join via Zoom, Justin Neely addressed this very topic with our class. It was an ‘a-ha’ moment for me indeed! Even though my journey continues, I believed I have arrived as a Potawatomi. With his permission, I have included his summary, which is key to each of us truly appreciating what it means when we say, “Bodewadmi Ndaaw!”

Being and doing Potawatomi

Bodewadmi Zhechkeween — Potawatomi doing

Yo’o Gāzechkmēnūm — Use our language

Nīmēnd — Dance

Veterans report

Veterans report

Veterans report

Veterans report

Veterans report
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 more than 37,000 members and through hard work, we have maintained a strong financial position and protected and expanded benefits that so many of our members depend on. I hope to continue this work on behalf of the members I represent in District 7.

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Motivational speaker Mitch Factor urges self-care, positivity

Employees from Citizen Potawatomi Nation enterprises heard from an Indigenous motivational speaker and comedian about managing stress in their lives.

Oklahoma native Mitch Factor (Seminole/Menominee) spoke to CPN employees about the importance of self-care, maintaining a positive outlook and clear communication.

“I think helping people is where my heart is — and in dealing with stress,” he said.

Factor said stress causes people to experience a variety of emotions, from frustration to sadness to anger. It helps to identify these feelings and find healthy ways to cope with them. Often, people keep emotions inside, carrying the weight of those negative feelings and compounding the stress, he said.

Stress is harmful to the body, according to a report from the Mayo Clinic. Long-term stress can lead to depression, anxiety, heart disease, heart attacks, stroke, obesity and high blood pressure.

A 2020 report by the American Psychological Association said 78 percent of adults have experienced more stress due to the pandemic in addition to pre-pandemic stresses about finances, work, school, housing, food and healthcare.

Even with many pandemic restrictions relaxed, people may still be dealing with events that occurred during the pandemic and may not have fully processed those feelings, Factor said.

“Every time I get done with the session, there’s always two or three people that come up and talk to me, and some of them say they feel like I’ve been talking to them directly,” he said. “I believe that nobody’s stuck in their ways and everyone can change for the better if they want to.”

Factor said he relates to the busy schedules people have today, filled with their children’s school activities, their jobs and time for themselves. Trying to meet too many commitments often leads to additional stress.

The father of three said it is easy to fall into routines without taking time to reflect and prioritize wellness. To reduce stress, Factor suggests spending time outside of their normal roles, such as mother, husband or employee.

“Play with your kids, go fishing, do some crafting,” he said. “The goal is to create a healthy balance of all our roles.”

Factor suggests regular and clear communication with a spouse, children and others.

“Be clear about your expectations, your boundaries,” he said. “Spend your time (communicating and) preventing problems instead of trying to fix them.”

Dividing up household chores, encouraging family members to talk with each other in a respectful way and giving everyone time for a break can increase family harmony, he said.

Adopting a more physical lifestyle also alleviates stress, Factor said. He suggests having a regular wellness break by setting aside time during the day or week for relaxing activities.

“Don’t make excuses about being active,” he said. “Try new activities like yoga, walking, stretching. And experience your senses to the fullest. If there’s a smell, sound or taste or sight that helps you relax, then use it.”

He urges employers to remember that many employees may need time to care for themselves while they serve others.

“A part of the pandemic, the protocols, the (precautionary) steps we have to take, we continue to do those, but don’t let them be the focus of why we come to work,” he said. “It’s very important that we are well before we are able to help other people. We have to be helping ourselves.”

Raised in Shawnee, Oklahoma, Factor first pursued an entertainment career in stand-up comedy and the film and television industries. He has appeared at Bricktown’s Comedy Warehouse and Joker’s Comedy Club in Oklahoma City. His movie and television credits include The Last of the Mohicans and Broken Chain. He has also enjoyed a more than 30-year career in early childhood education, specifically in the Head Start program.

Learn more about stress as a result of the coronavirus pandemic from the American Psychological Association at cpn.news/apa2020.
Tribal Chairman – John “Rocky” Barrett

As I write this column, we are still working out the details of how these Tribal members will be honored. We have spoken about having a breakfast, doing a spirit plate meal, and honoring them with special songs during the powwow. The details will be worked out, and information will be available in the June Hownikan.

For those who have not been “home” in the past couple of years, the landscape and infrastructure will look slightly different. Some projects were funded by one-time funds from the U.S. government to help respond to the pandemic, and others were plans to expand our economic development so that we can continue to provide services and fund the Tribal government. Here are some of the things you’ll see when you visit.

Food Distribution Center

We purchased the corner lot of Hardesty and Gordon Cooper, which had been home to Hardesty Grocery. The property was used as a food distribution center throughout 2021. This purchase and the food distribution program were made possible due to the one-time allocation of funds through the CARES Act.

FireLake Arena

FireLake Arena was built as an entertainment venue and has hosted numerous concerts. Because of the coronavirus, the number of artists touring dramatically decreased. Those who continue to tour have increased their fees considerably. Arena staff have worked diligently to bring in other events, including a robotics tournament, state wrestling tournaments and collegiate basketball tournaments. They even hosted the Kansas City BBQ Championship. To remain a contender for these events, we have made some arena upgrades, including a new basketball floor, a better video screen and locker rooms.

Grand Casino

We have replaced the buffet with a food court and added Grand House Brewing. You will also notice additional event space. These changes will help the Grand remain competitive in conferences and patrons from throughout the state.

Infrastructure

Bridge upgrades across our jurisdiction are another important sign of progress that many have missed since 2020. Lost in the furor of the pandemic, our roads department completed two truss bridges over Creek Creek, the north and east portions of the Grand Casino complex. Often in danger of central Oklahoma’s sudden flash floods, these bridges provide our casino, healthcare complex and travel stop customers safe thoroughfares in our state’s most severe weather.

If you take a drive east from the FireLake complex, out towards the Eagle Aviary and Iron Horse Industrial Park on Hardesty Road, you’ll see an almost identical bridge over Squirrel Creek. This is the first in a multi-year project between CPN, the state and county to widen Hardesty Road to support the growing manufacturing businesses at Iron Horse.

Iron Horse

Finally, at Iron Horse Industrial Park, many of you will see the Tribe’s latest and most promising economic endeavor, Sovereign Pipe Technology. Rising from the former wheat fields, this anchor will make polyurethane steel pipes for municipal water and sewer systems. It is a tremendous project, and should the market cooperate, the factory should be up and running by the time you arrive.

I look forward to seeing you all, happy and healthy, as we honor those who have walked on or who cannot join us this year. As always, it is an honor to serve as your Tribal Chairman.

Migwetch
(Thank you),

John “Rocky” Barrett

(He Leads Them Home) Tribal Chairman

Vice-Chairman – Linda Capps

I wrote an article approximately 10 years ago about the 1990s and some of the important events of that time. I would like to expand on that concept since we have so many new Tribal members — approximately 7,000. There were lots of exciting events that happened during the 1980s. During that time, the celebrated “per capita payment” capita emerged due to the settlement of land claims between our Tribe and the United States government. The three payments came at three different times — 1960: $23.89, 1967: $205.87, 1983: $748.21. The payments were distributed to Tribal members that were enrolled as of June 29, 1960. The rolls were closed at that time unless a person was 1/8 degree Citizen Potawatomi Indian blood. (Tribal rolls did not re-open for enrollment again until 1985.) When the first per capita check was distributed in 1960, there were 7,779 Tribal members that were eligible to receive the funds. Those that were under the age of 18 did not receive their check until their 18th birthday, at which time they had to apply. You may have heard a parent or grandparent speak of the per capita payment. It was tramped up more than it was turned out to be, but it was exciting to speculate that it could be a monetary treasure. Many of you will remember the anticipation and how your relatives talked about the next per cap.

During the 1970s, the first Indian Self-Determination Act passed. This would eventually be very important to tribes all over the United States. In 1984, our Tribe entered into an agreement for high-stakes bingo, which proved to be an unsuccessful endeavor. The short-lived enterprise ended in 1985 due to poor management. Nevertheless, it was a valuable lessons in economics for our Tribe. Following the agreement, negotiations and contractual agreements were meticulously developed. Also in 1984, the Citizen Band of Potawatomi Tax Commission was established.

The commission was vital to nation-building. It was valuable then, and it is certainly today. The tax revenue at that time was small, but developing the process for the Tribe to collect taxes on enterprises was a giant leap for the future. Today, our tax revenue is central to Tribal operations. It helps finance scholarships and other valuable services.

The Tribal court system was established in 1986. Up until that time, our Tribe had to share court facilities and a judge with several other tribes. During the year 1989, the Tribe purchased First Oklahoma Bank, N.A., a failing $14 million bank in Shawnee. Today, with a dynamic president, competent board of directors and stable environment, First National Bank & Trust of Shawnee, Oklahoma, is a thriving one half-billion-dollar bank. The local, home-owned bank is alive and well with many plans for a bright future.

The Tribe began gaming upon the passage of the National Indian Gaming Act in 1988. Bingo was the game of the day until 1992 was passed. Initially, there was only room for a few gaming machines to be added to the bingo halls. In 2003, the building was expanded, and revenue from the new gaming operation became vital to the progress of the Nation. In 1996, the Tribe established the housing authority and began the process of managing the first apartments of what we now know as Father Murphy Housing. Also in 1996, the Tribe would gain a new name by the vote of the people. There was resistance in the beginning; however, the new name Citizen Potawatomi Nation was selected by our Tribal people. I, personally, was very pleased, believing that we truly could become a great Nation.

The newly named Citizen Potawatomi Nation executed the Self-Governance compact with the IHS in 1997. This was another stepping stone to a more efficient and effective system for our government. Self-governance allows for Tribal government to self-rule by taking control of decision-making authority over federal programs and resources. Today, our office of Self-Governance has flourished with competent, intelligent staff members that help negotiate contracts, compacts and grants for the Tribe. In 1998, self- governance was expanded to bring in other government programs in addition to IHS, including realty, Tribal Rolls, Tribal Court and the Indian Reservation Roads program (1999).

The Supreme Court ruling in 1998 ordered that the Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma could not place real estate in trust within our Tribe’s jurisdiction (original reservation). This is known as the Collier decision. In the same year, KGFF was purchased, and CPN moved to the newly renovated headquarters complex that still houses governmental offices. In 1999, the Nation purchased the Belisle property for its Our Goods retail store and purchased the Knight farm, which added 1,057 acres to the Tribe’s contiguous land.

The annual Family Reunion Festival replaced the long-time intertribal powwow in the summer of 1999. It is the same family reunion that we look forward to each year on the last full weekend of June. I appreciate serving as your vice-chairman and cherish the opportunity to correspond with you in this article.

My best to each of you,

Linda Capps

Spectawakwe (Black Bird Woman) Vice-Chairman 405-275-3121 work 405-659-0314 cell lcapps@potawatomi.org

The Citizen Potawatomi Nation is thrilled to announce the launch of CPN Care - a new telehealth benefit offering for you and your family. Starting this month, CPN members gain 24/7 access to doctors, counselors and more via phone, video or our new mobile app - at NO cost to you!
Happy May! It has been a privilege to get to know all of you, and it was such an honor to host my first district meeting in St. Louis. I look forward to seeing many of you at Family Reunion Festival in June. Make sure you find me and introduce yourself!

D1 is full of caring, great people! In that light, I’ve decided share this platform and invite different citizens from D1 to write as guests here in my column from time to time. I asked Kevin Roberts to contribute first, and I am delighted that he agreed. Kevin cares deeply about Potawatomi culture and the interests of D1 and our Nation. I have been blessed to get to know him over the past several months. I hope you enjoy his contribution here and on page 14.

Bazho jayék
(Hello everyone),

Alan Melot
Legislator
District 1
608 S. Sergeant
Joplin, MO 64801
417-312-3307
alan.melot@potawatomi.org

Bazho wiskahcim mine
Hownikan
(Hello friends & Potawatomi family),

St. Louis District meeting on March 19-20, 2022

We had 80 folks registered to attend the District 1 meeting in St. Louis. Absent unforeseen circumstances that kept a few away, over 55 folks enjoyed a wonderful weekend meeting in downtown St. Louis, Missouri.

We enjoyed beautiful spring weather with sunshine and temps in the 70s. On Saturday afternoon, folks had the opportunity to visit the Cahokia Mounds located just across the Mississippi River in Collinsville, Illinois, or tour the newly renovated St. Louis Gateway Arch and Interpretive Museum.

Cahokia Mounds (State Park) are considered to be the largest and most complex archaeological site north of the great pre-Columbian sites in Mexico. It is the site of a pre-Columbian Native American city located directly across the Mississippi River from downtown St. Louis. The existing park contains 80 mounds and sits on 2,200 acres. However, the ancient city was much larger. At its apex around 1100 C.E., the city covered about 6 square miles and included about 120 manmade earthen mounds; its population may have briefly exceeded contemporaneous London, which at the time was approximately 14,000-18,000.

Gateway Arch and Interpretive Museum (National Park) sits on 91 acres. The Gateway Arch stands 630 feet high and is made of stainless steel. It was designed by Finnish American architect Eero Saarinen and completed in 1967. There is a small tram that you can ride to the top and peer out across Missouri to the west, and Illinois to the east from a very unique vantage point.

The adjoining museum covers 201 years of history about the westward expansion of the United States with an emphasis on St. Louis’ paramount role in that era. It is located directly beneath the arch. Interactive story galleries guide visitors through time from the founding of St. Louis in 1764 to the building of the Gateway Arch in 1965. The museum describes the westward expansion period of the United States with more perspectives from the cultures involved. Significant interpretative displays and information are provided specific to the Indigenous cultures that existed in and around the area. This is a beautiful museum and is a must see if you ever visit St. Louis. In 2018, the Gateway Arch and Interpretive Museum were renovated at a cost of $380 million.

Following the exciting afternoon adventures, district members departed for home. The CPN executive committee had the opportunity to hear a presentation provided by CPN tribal member, Potawatomi historian and President of the Trail of Death Association, George Godfrey, Ph.D. George’s presentation was based on the history of the Trail of Death and was shared from the perspective of an individual having made the journey. George possesses a wealth of knowledge, and his presentation captivated an attentive audience throughout the evening. George has authored numerous books relating to his ancestry and the Potawatomi. You can google George Godfrey, Ph.D., and find several articles that have appeared in the Hownikan about him over the years as well as information on the many books he has authored.

Following Sunday morning’s breakfast, hugs and goodbyes, members departed for home.

June Family Festival, June 24-26, 2022

Reminder that Family Reunion Festival is going to be here before you know it. It is a great opportunity to get involved with many of the activities discussed relating to what it means to be Potawatomi. Hope to see you there!

Bami Mine Gwaamwen
(I will see you later on),
Kevin Roberts
District 2 – Eva Marie Carney

District 3 – Bob Whistler
tobacco is preferred. As a gift, it would depict a happy amount wrapped in a cloth pouch. I am including a photo of what I use for small tobacco gifts along with a photo of how a regular pouch has been wrapped for giftg. As you can see, the basic gift may be about half the size of a coin from a bottle. For a regular tobacco pouch purchase, you would be able to get half a dozen or more small gift bundles made. As a side note, those living on the East Coast had to grow their own tobacco very much like what we see today. In Texas, there is a plant that was used as tobacco by the Native Americans living here that is called mullen. It is a green plant with very small yellow flowers. In addition to standing in for wild tobacco from other areas, it could be used as a demulcent. Demulcents make it easier for a person to cope with severe coughing and throat irritation.

YouTube

While I do not use Facebook as a regular thing, I do receive notices in my email about something posted on Facebook. Often that posting is something that is on YouTube and will remain there for some time. Just for the heck of it, I decided to go to YouTube and then put in the word Potawatomi. To my surprise, I found that this area has so much in the way of information on our culture, heritage and current happenings. For example, this year at Family Reunion Festival, they may decide to hold a class on making moccasins. YouTube has a short or 12 or 13-minute course on how to makeacker roc moccasins. If you are going to Festival, you might want to just check this out as good knowledge to take to that class. There are other items involving the Language Department programs as well as copies of editorials on what our Nation may be doing that were carried in the Shawnee newspaper. I bring this up as another source of information and training on our Nation.

Gathering

At the 2022 Gathering of Potawatomi Nations this year, you will be in an area where the black ash tree is grown. The wood from this tree has been used to make very fine baskets by the Abenaki, Chippewa, Malecite, Meskwaki, Mohawk, Potawatomi, Penobscot and other tribes. The wood from this tree was also used to make stumps, flutes, and traditional lacrosse sticks. The tree is very unique in that the branches spout directly across from each other on opposite sides of the tree. Leaves follow a similar pattern with an end leaf and then compound leaflets directly across from each other on opposite sides of the stem. Each leaf has from five to 11 leaflets. For the last 20 years, this tree has started to become endangered because of the emerald ash borer. The borer was discovered in a house in the Detroit, Michigan, area. It is an exotic Asian beetle that they believe arrived in the United States in packaging material on a cargo ship. Currently, it has migrated and may be found in Ontario, Ohio, Indiana, Maryland, Illinois, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Indiana, Wisconsin, Missouri, Virginia, Minnesota and New York. Various parts of the tree were used for medicinal purposes by our ancestors for fevers, sores, itching scalp and as an antiseptic stimulant. The Gun Lake Potawatomi Pigeon family has made baskets for years of black ash and brought them to Gathering. The basket I have pictured was purchased at our 2008 Gathering visit at Walpole Island, Canada. Our family received the bracelet in Wisconsin in 2017. There may come a time in the future when these baskets will be no known baskets or stories of the demise of the black ash tree. The basket may cost you $25 or a bit more for a small basket. You may not get another Gathering for years, so you may consider investing in one this year. They are signed on their bottom generally in copper-colored ink for authenticity.

Before leaving Gathering, while there, you may want to look for some cedar and sweetgrass. We do have Texas, but it is not the wonderful flat cedar found in the Great Lakes area. I especially secure this to be used by the female Potawatomi I ask questions or need help for any event. If by chance you use the regular four elements of sweetgrass, tobacco, cedar and sage, My Sister, May, will be around to place both the sweetgrass and cedar because that is where both are grown. You may also look for our wild rice while there. My District 2 counterpart Eva Marie Carney has a great recipe for a wild rice casserole, which I suspect she will share. I have a copy of her recipe from her, so you may also contact me.

Mdamen

For well over the time of my tenure as an elected district representative, we had the Potawatomi Language Program for students each year. The group consists of just graduated high school seniors and/or freshman college students. The size of the group ranges between eight and 10 participants from around our Nation. They are brought into Shawnee each summer for approximately six weeks to learn about the workings of our Nation through education through various department staff. During the past two years, the program was not held due to COVID-19. In the spring of this year, Tesia Zientek and her staff in the Education Department created the Mdamen program, which was announced in February. We have received positive social media and through the education portal. It is an extension of the PEP, except it is available to Potawatomi from all areas relative to our Nation. The participants had the opportunity to ask questions and in the final session gave reflections on their journey. During the final hour of each session, the participants broke out into small groups to talk about what they had learned and work on some complex topics that had surfaced. The word mdamen is the reference to corn in our language for the literal translation that “it’s miraculous seed.” Corn is one of the Three Sisters we talk about. Our ancestors planted it as the shade for the squash grown below, and the pole or post to allow the beans to also grow upon. The language department found use of the name Mdamen as a cultural connection for the seed of information that was to be given to the participants in this year’s program. This program is planned to be offered again next spring. It is a great way to learn more about how our Nation operates, and I think you will find participating very worthwhile.

Black ash basket and puff brush.

Gathering across North America.


Black ash basket and puff brush.

Gathering across North America.

Education Commissioner Randy Watson’s remarks about our state’s Indian tribes — and those of Rep. Wheeler, Commissioner Bob Whistler. Watson expressed concern about how our Children are being educated. We have over 570 enrolled youth between the ages of 5 and 18 living in Kansas. The following is Rupnick’s Letter to the editor which appeared in the Topica-Capital Journal on Sunday, April 3rd:

We face a defining moment after leaders made dangerous remarks about Indian tribes in Kansas

How we educate our children is how we shape the future. The words we say, the actions we take — and those we don’t — guide the learning experiences of our youths. And as our children grow, they will use what they’ve learned to decide who they will be and how they will shape our society. Education Commissioner Randy Watson’s remarks about our state’s Indian tribes — and those of Rep. Wheeler, Commissioner Bob Whistler, Rep. Wheeler, Commissioner Bob Whistler’s remarks about our state’s Indian tribes — and those of Rep. Wheeler, Commissioner Bob Whistler.

This month I have covered a variety of areas, and I am fortunate and proud to bring information to you on the activities of our citizens. There are many of you who may have received an award or milestone that I believe would be of interest to others in our Nation. Please let your district representative know of these recognitions so recognition may be given. I am grateful to serve as your district representative and will be your voice. So, contact me for any areas relative to our Nation where you may have a question.

Nageeg (Later),

Bob Whistler

Black ash basket and puff brush.

Gathering across North America.


This month I have covered a variety of areas, and I am fortunate and proud to bring information to you on the activities of our citizens. There are many of you who may have received an award or milestone that I believe would be of interest to others in our Nation. Please let your district representative know of these recognitions so recognition may be given. I am grateful to serve as your district representative and will be your voice. So, contact me for any areas relative to our Nation where you may have a question.
It's time to end anti-Indigenous mockery in our government and in our schools, and push for greater equity in our curricula.

Native tribes have been in Kansas since before its colonization, and our land and culture are the foundation of our society. But it is not enough for us to merely exist in a country built on Native American land and in a state that's home to four federally recognized Indian tribes. We must continue to relentlessly advocate for representation and inclusion at our schools.

The words of Commissioner Watson and Rep. Wheeler, and the unsettling natural delivery of their racist remarks, were akin to the mockery of Indian mascots at school or the ‘tomahawk chop’ celebrated at Kansas City Chiefs games at Kansas City Chiefs games.

As it goes, I did and we did. In Arizona, you simply cannot have 100 degrees, and when I arrived at 8 a.m., I became suddenly aware the patio at the Goldfield Ghost Town was not going to work. We had a backup, thanks to Goldfield owner Cowboy Dan and his technical people. "Gene," Cowboy Dan said, "You must choose now, inside or out, because we cannot change you over once your meeting starts."

I try to plan District 5 meetings at different venues that cater to families. Then there is the pandemic issue we had, and many people still have concerns. It is my belief the young will carry on for our Nation if they enjoy the meetings. If there are bad memories or they are baring, that probably won’t happen. So I always have a kids’ table for backup supplies.

We used to meet in February many years ago, but February and March are the most desired timeframes here, making the cost double. It simply became prohibitive. We then started meeting on Sundays when Chairman John Barrett had meetings with the Native Nations in Tucson in April.

Saying to myself, “I really need to start rethinking hotels,” I put the question to our CPN members, citing how much easier it would be to control or manage. Not one person in the room of over 100 thought that was a good idea. Guess we go forward, ensuring we have a back up in case it is outside and for the families in our group.

We did a great meeting, and everyone was so excited about seeing each other, the room was constantly buzzing.

We were fortunate enough to have Bob Schooe, the Mayor of Goldfield Ghost Town, tell the old west stories about the Native communities and the lights that occurred over the gold and the Superstition Wilderness Area Thunder Gods.

Scott Holmester has moved to Tucson and is now one of the CPN District 5 members. Scott had been working with District 4 Legislator Jon Bourassa in Kansas on the Native American mass grave sites and spoke to us about their research and what they were finding. When asked, he spoke without hesitation, and everyone listened intently.

Thank you, Scott, for allowing us to share your knowledge as we normally only have the opportunity to read about it.

We have had many changes, and I shared the different and/or additional benefits to all as a reminder of what is available to members outside the jurisdiction, meaning outside of Oklahoma. The CPN medical program was of strong interest as well as education. The new expansion of the housing benefits followed.
This year also sees the return of Bohzo nikan (Hello friends), Reunion Festival in June. If my first trip to Shawnee, Oklahoma, was a reminder to my father about his home in Oklahoma, and that made him smile. My father told me the stories of growing up on the banks of the North Canadian River during the hot summers, how the family would gather on Sunday afternoon, and as we walked through the old pecan trees on his grandmother’s allotment, how he and the other kids would play among the trees after walking home from school. Then, my father knelt down and gathered a few pecans that were under a tree and put them in his pocket. When we returned home to California, my father took the pecans and placed them in the ground in front of our house. To this day, if you were to drive past the home where I was raised, there stands a beautiful pecan tree that is a reminder to my father about his home in Oklahoma, and that made him smile. The reason behind telling this story is that I would like you to experience the same connection with our homeland that I was fortunate to experience. I would ask that you make time to come to the Family Reunion Festival and learn about our Nation and your history. It is always the last full weekend in June. To this day, if you were to drive past the home where I was raised, there stands a beautiful pecan tree that was a reminder to my father about his home in Oklahoma, and that made him smile. The reason behind telling this story is that I would like you to experience the same connection with our homeland that I was fortunate to experience. I would ask that you make time to come to the Family Reunion Festival and learn about our Nation and your history. It is always the last full weekend in June. This year’s dates are June 26th to June 29th. I know you will feel at home also, and while you are there, maybe pick up a pecan or two and put them in your pocket. In July of each year, all the Potawatomi tribes gather. This year’s 2022 Potawatomi Gathering is at the Hanahville Indian Community in Michigan from July 25th to July 30th. Please join us.

Once again, I would like to say what an honor it is to serve you as your District 7 Legislator. 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. Please also take the time to give me a call or send an email with your contact information so that I can keep you informed of the happenings within the Nation and district. (Thank you), Mark Johnson

With the pandemic hopefully becoming more manageable, it looks like 2022 may finally allow our District 8 community to rejoin our fellow Potawatomi from across the country in celebrations and gatherings. Close to home, we’ve got our May 28 District 8 Cookout in Olympia, Washington. Please see the attached invitation for more details!

This year also sees the return of our Citizen Potawatomi Family Reunion Festival in June. If you haven’t done so, I highly encourage you to attend. Those of us far from Oklahoma often miss the opportunity to see the employees, facilities and settings that are part of the Nation’s everyday existence. Family Reunion Festival — especially after such a long absence — is an excellent opportunity to see where our ancestors rebuit once removed from the Great Lakes and Kansas. Seeing the Cultural Heritage Center, being in the powwow arena as the drums are played and visiting with distant family — they truly give one the sense of a community. One of the things I enjoy the most about a pilgrimage to the Nation is seeing progress in new or upgraded buildings to house our people, various enterprises or Tribal health care clinics. Another favorite that must-see is our Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center. CHC Director Kelli Mosteller, Ph.D., and her staff have an absolutely amazing job of creating a fresh and engaging experience for Tribal members to learn about our traditions, history and our place in the world.

VPOTWATOMI NATION TRIBAL ROLLS

The Tribal Rolls Department is responsible for determining eligibility for Tribal enrollment, burial insurance, and Tribal ID cards, and assists with genealogical and historical research. The department is also responsible for maintaining and updating the computer membership list, utilizing Tribal membership information for various types of census data, and creating the voter eligibility lists in the direction of the Secretary-Treasurer for the CPN Election Commission’s Secretary-Treasurer.

In addition to culture, competitions, dancing and comradery, the Nation votes on legislative positions and budgets. Voting takes place in person and, of course, by absentee ballot for District 8 members. While District 8’s legislative seat isn’t on the ballot this year, Tribal members across the country are eligible to vote on the budget, so please do so and participate in your democracy. If you are unsure of attending or would like more information on these topics or others, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

As always, it is an honor to be your legislator,

Dave Carney

Kagasghi (Raven)
Legislator, District 8
520 Lilly Road, Building 1
Olympia, WA 98506
360-259-4027
dcarney@potawatomi.org
Alva Donald Melot
Melot Family

Alva Donald Melot of Tecumseh, Oklahoma, went peacefully to be with the Lord on April 3, 2022, at the age of 103. He was born on Jan. 13, 1919, to Vernon and Mary (Tinney) Melot in Wanette, Oklahoma, in a one-room house on his father’s Potawatomi allotment. As a young boy, Alva moved with his family to Tecumseh, Oklahoma, where he remained a lifelong resident. He graduated from Tecumseh High School in 1937. He then went on to graduate from the University of Oklahoma with his master’s in education. Alva was dedicated to education, shown by his willingness to hitchhike to campus every single week.

After meeting the love of his life, whom he taught, he married Betty Jean Branson on Sept. 22, 1951, in Phoenix, Arizona. Their four children, Judi, Jodi, and Mike, and 16 great-grandchildren. As a young boy, Alva spent over 40 years as a teacher, principal and superintendent. In his spare time, he mowed school property, painted whatever needed paint, dug water lines, performed repairs, and attended thousands of school sporting and musical events, graduations, recognitions and celebrations of all kinds. He was a member of the Tecumseh Historical Society as well as an active and involved member of the Tecumseh Alumni Association. He never missed an Alumni Banquet until his passing.

Alva spent over 40 years as a teacher, coach, principal and superintendent. In his spare time, he mowed school property, painted whatever needed paint, dug water lines, performed repairs, and attended thousands of school sporting and musical events, graduations, recognitions and celebrations of all kinds. He was a member of the Tecumseh Historical Society as well as an active and involved member of the Tecumseh Alumni Association. He never missed an Alumni Banquet until his passing.

Martin Steinmetz
Wickens/Beaubien Family

Martin Raymond Steinmetz of Bristow, Oklahoma, passed away at the age of 70 on March 30, 2022, after a brave fight with cancer. He was born Oct. 5, 1951, in Corpus Christi, Texas, to Harold and Rita Steinmetz.

He moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma, to attend the University of Tulsa Law School and graduated on May 5, 1990. He was sworn into the Supreme Court of the United States and the Supreme Court of Oklahoma on Sept. 19, 1990, and served with the Federal Department of the Interior of Oklahoma as a solicitor until his retirement on Dec. 31, 2019, having served the citizens of Oklahoma for 30 years.

He lived in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for many years and retired to a cattle ranch in Brinson, where he lived until his passing.

He was very proud of his Potawatomi heritage, a descendant of Carrie Rhodd and Lee Wickers. He worked for the benefit of the Tribe in many ways. He also contributed to many charities with his time, money and legal expertise.

He is preceded in death by his father, Harold L. Steinmetz; and survived by his mother, Rita I. Steinmetz of Corpus Christi, Texas; his sisters, Teresa M. Temple of Middleburg, Florida, and Leann E. Steinmetz of Corpus Christi; his brothers, Dennis J. Steinmetz and sister-in-law Jane Steinmetz of Poway, California, and Beck J. Steinmetz of Corpus Christi.

He also survived by his eight nieces and nephews, Robin Temple, Cheryl Merritt, Pamela Tune, Kimberly Temple, Brittany Dean, Devin Aguilar, Katie Aguilar and James Steinmetz; eight great nieces and nephews, Justin Temple, Ashley Loftus, Jordan Jackson, Kayla Merritt, Clayton Ross, Trent Bennett, Trista Bennett and Aurora Walden; and two great-great nieces, Adalynn Loftus and Parker Loftus.

He was well known in the Tulsa and Bristow communities. He was loved and will be misses by all his family and friends.

Thomas Edward Bruno
Bruno Family

A survivor of the 1970 Lubbock Tornado, he received not one, but two college degrees in medical technology (1969) and computer programming (1982) in her lifetime. After many years of service, she retired from Texas Tech University on her alma mater — in 2017.

A proud Neshnabekwé, Mary Ruth fervently advocated for marginalized communities, and as an active member of Lubbock PFLAG, hosted, led and sponsored myriad events in her home.

In addition to her political involvement, registering voters and marching many a mile for the causes she believed in, she cared deeply for the communities she found herself part of and in proximity to.

She led an energetic and dynamic life. A self-trained artist, she mastered a variety of painting techniques, which she applied generously to the walls and furniture of her own, colorful family home. She followed in a long line of Boduwadawitke artists, just as her mother and her grandmother before her.

An expert gardener, her lush plots regularly attracted the attention of a great many bees and other pollinators. Her expert knowledge of plants and wildlife undergirded a long commitment to the environment and its protection.

Though the acrylic paint sits on her shelf, untouched since her hands placed them there, the flowers in her garden have bloomed in the days since she walked on. Mary Ruth’s impact lives on through the hundreds of lives she’s touched, her children, grandchild and many friends — just as it does through those pink, white and yellow flowers that bob in the gentle, Tennessee breeze and the bees who land upon them.

She leaves behind son, Charles Green; daughter, Courtney Willierson; and grandchild, Kolb Willerton.

Mary Ruth "Wabmimi” Green Gossett, born Dec. 14, 1945, to George and Lillian Green in Slator, Texas, passed on April 21, 2022, in Nashville, Tennessee.

A survivor of the 1970 Lubbock Tornado, she received not one, but two college degrees in medical technology (1969) and computer programming (1982) in her lifetime. After many years of service, she retired from Texas Tech University on her alma mater — in 2017.

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She leaves behind son, Charles Green; daughter, Courtney Willierson; and grandchild, Kolb Willerton.
WALKING ON

Stephen R. Peltier
Peltier Family

Stephen R. Peltier, 65, passed away at Birchwood Terrace Healthcare in Burlington, Vermont, during the late evening hours of Feb. 28, 2015, following an upper respiratory illness. Steve was born in Shawnee, Oklahoma, on Oct. 28, 1949, to Gerald L. and Virginia R. Peltier. He graduated from Burlington High School in 1969, and after a brief stint in the U.S. Navy, moved back to Oklahoma for a number of years. He returned to Vermont in 1985 and worked a number of jobs around the area, his favorite being Velan Valve. Steve is survived by siblings, Michael Peltier and Catherine, Dan and Dawn Peltier, and their daughter, Kate; and Laurie Peltier and her son, Scott. No viewings were scheduled, and a springtime burial ceremony was planned at the convenience of his family. Arrangements were by Stephen C. Gregory & Son of South Burlington.

Thomas Andrew Mitchell
Milot/Beaubien Family

Thomas Andrew Mitchell was born Aug. 14, 1934, in Wanette, Oklahoma, to Agnes Louise and Anthony Robert Milot. Thomas graduated in 1955 from Cushing High School in Cushing, Oklahoma, where he played baseball. At OCCU, he met the love of his life, Jeanne Lacey, and they were married on Feb. 26, 1956. They lived for many years in Del City, Oklahoma. Tom worked for the Oklahoma City Water Department for more than 50 years, retiring on April 1, 2008. He loved fishing and tinkering in the garage, and he loved his family. He was preceded in death by his father and mother; and a brother, Kenneth Hey. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Marie; his sons, Steve Mitchell and wife Vickie, David Mitchell, and daughter Deanna Berry and husband Ron; grandchildren, Stephanie, Tiffany, Myke, Gentry and Pierce; a great-grandchild, Breyen, and one more on the way; and his sister and brother-in-law, Marie and Jack Shaw. Services were held Jan. 31, 2022, at the Watanee Cemetery under the direction of Ron Hubler & Son Funeral Home in Moore.

Robert Ellsworth
Beaubien Family

Robert "Bob" Ellsworth Precore passed away peacefully on Friday, March 18, 2022, in Oklahoma City.

Don Mulanax
Levier Family

Robert Ellsworth Precore

Lizzie, Annie, Katie, Molly, Emily, Paige, Cole, Kaitlyn, Jim, Drew, Ethan, Evan and Erin; and 10 great-grandchildren. Preceding him in death was his loving wife, his parents, his brother, Don and his son-in-law David. He was a wonderful and loving Dad and PawPaw. He loved to have fun, and he was not shy about sharing how much God blessed his life.

Robert Ellsworth Precore

Don married Mandy Babal on Jan. 26, 2011. She survives him of the home. He gained two more children and more grandchildren, whom he loved unconditionally.

1957. He took his grandfather, Thomas Andrew Mitchell was born Aug. 14, 1934, in Wanette, Oklahoma, to Agnes Louise and Anthony Robert Milot. He graduated in 1955 from Cushing High School in Cushing, Oklahoma, where he played baseball. At OCCU, he met the love of his life, Jeanne Lacey, and they were married on Feb. 26, 1956. They lived for many years in Del City, Oklahoma. Tom worked for the Oklahoma City Water Department for more than 50 years, retiring on April 1, 2008. He loved fishing and tinkering in the garage, and he loved his family. He was preceded in death by his father and mother; and a brother, Kenneth Hey. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Marie; his sons, Steve Mitchell and wife Vickie, David Mitchell, and daughter Deanna Berry and husband Ron; grandchildren, Stephanie, Tiffany, Myke, Gentry and Pierce; a great-grandchild, Breyen, and one more on the way; and his sister and brother-in-law, Marie and Jack Shaw. Services were held Jan. 31, 2022, at the Watanee Cemetery under the direction of Ron Hubler & Son Funeral Home in Moore.

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Robert Ellsworth Precore

Don married Mandy Babal on Jan. 26, 2011. She survives him of the home. He gained two more children and more grandchildren, whom he loved unconditionally.

Don was preceded in death by his father, Ivan Mulanax, in 2008; stepmother, Janet Sue Thompson Mulanax, in 1995; stepfather, Delbert Safarik, in 1998; and infant brother, Robert Duane Mulanax, in 1955. He is survived by his mother, Regina Safarik, Toppeka, Kansas; his children, John Jeanneret and Erin Jeanneret Lacey (Matt Ross), Em- nett, Kansas; Hunter Ramage Mayetta, Kansas, and Harleigh Ramage Marhe, Hoyt, Kansas; his grandchildren, Jyden "Slick," Emma "Babe," Landon "Pando," Lilie "Lili," Donovan "Bubs," Kohlter, Isabella, Kaisen and激; his beloved granddog, D.O.G.; his brothers, Richard Mulanax, Wamego, Kansas, Mark Mulanax (Anna), Toppeka, Kansas, Gary Mulanax (Shelly), Hoyt, Kan- sas, Chris Mulanax (Dave), San Francisco, California, D.J. Goss and Mike Goss, Toppeka, Kansas, and Willee Goss, Everett, Wash- ington; his sisters, Deb Bussart (Erv), Toppeka, Kansas, and Janie Quiet (Kenny), Delta, Kansas, and many nieces and nephews.

Don was cremated and services were held Sunday, March 20, 2022, at the Citizen Potawatomi Nation Community Building in Rousville, Kansas, with a dinner and smudge ceremony. And, because Don re- quested he go out with a bang, a short finale was held immediately after service at Dry Creekbed Saloon in Emmett, Kansas.

Janice Ann Dorsey
Bourassa Family

John Harrison Garver
Darling Family

John Harrison Garver, age 25, of West Jefferson, Ohio, passed away on Monday, March 28, 2022. John was an active member of the Jeep group "MOJO," formerly employed with Surphen before starting his own off-road company called Salt Creek Offroad. John is survived by his loving wife, Olivia Garver; son, Weston Garver; parents, Lewis and Susan Garver; father and mother-in-law, Frank and Kimberly; his grand- parents, Marvin and Rita Waller; grandparents, Andrea Mast and Carole Reed; brother, Chris (Andrea) Garver; sister, Danielle Garver; fur baby, Razzie; and many loving relatives and friends.

John Harrison Garver
Darling Family

John is survived by his loving wife, Olivia Garver; son, Weston Garver; parents, Lewis and Susan Garver; father and mother-in-law, Frank and Kimberly; his grandparents, Marvin and Rita Waller; grandparents, Andrea Mast and Carole Reed; brother, Chris (Andrea) Garver; sister, Danielle Garver; fur baby, Razzie; and many loving relatives and friends.

Following John’s wishes, he was an organ donor, and memorial contributions may be made to Lifeline of Ohio.