

YSG GWY A&P

September 2019

GIDUWA CHEROKEE NEWS

Official Newspaper of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma

Keetoowahs Win Right to Land In Trust



The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians held a press conference on Sept. 5 to announce it had won its land in trust case against the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. UKB leadership and administration were joined by several UKB supporters and employees that were invited to witness the historic occasion at the John Hair Cultural Center and Museum. PHOTO BRITTNEY BENNETT/GCN

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

TAHLEQUAH – The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit ruled Sept. 5 that the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma can take 76 acres of land in Tahlequah into trust, overturning a lower court injunction that denied the tribe from doing so in 2017.

“We want to thank the Lord for answering our prayers, no doubt about it,” said UKB Chief Joe Bunch in a Sept. 5 press conference. “This has been quite an ordeal, quite an undertaking since 2004. I certainly thank this Council for all they do and all the others involved with this. We certainly thank the Court of Appeals, the Department of Justice attorneys, our Attorney General Klint Cowan, all those who prayed, all those who visualized, all those who stood behind us. We thank each and every one of you.”

UKB Assistant Chief Jamie Thompson discussed how the journey to victory has been long, but the tribe has stayed committed. “The wheels of justice turn slow, but they always turn in your favor if you do what is right,” he said. “The UKB has always complied with what the federal government has asked.”

The UKB purchased its 76 acres of land in Tahlequah in 2000 and developed it for several uses including community services, cultural grounds, a museum and an elder center.

In 2004 the UKB submitted its application to take the tract of land into trust, which was approved by the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs in 2011.

The Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma filed a lawsuit against the BIA in response to the decision. *Cherokee Nation v. Zinke, et al.* alleged that the BIA violated jurisdictional treaties agreed upon between the CNO and the U.S.

Judge Ronald A. White of the Northern District Court of Oklahoma in Tulsa heard the case on May 31, 2017 and ruled in CNO’s favor.

He stated that the Interior’s decision was “not in accordance with the law” and enjoined the Interior secretary from putting the UKB land into trust “without the Cherokee Nation’s written consent and full consideration of the jurisdictional conflicts and the resulting administrative burdens the acquisition would place on the (Interior’s Eastern Oklahoma) Region.”

On Dec. 1, 2017 the U.S. Department of Justice attorneys filed an appeal of White’s decision, with the Tenth Circuit finally hearing the case on May 16, 2018 and issuing its decision on Sept. 5, 2019.

The three-judge panel was presented with several issues in the case, including if

the UKB had the same rights to ask for land in trust as other tribes do under Section 5 of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934.

Section 5 of the IRA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust “for the purpose of providing land for Indians.” At the time, “Indians” was defined as “all persons of Indian descent who are members of any recognized Indian tribe now under Federal jurisdiction, and all persons who are descendants of such members who were, on June 1, 1934, residing within the present boundaries of any Indian reservation...”

Congress recognized the UKB in 1946 under the terms of the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936. CNO argued this disqualified UKB from meeting the qualifications defined as “Indian” under the IRA and thus, land in trust should not be possible.

However, the BIA cited Section 3 of OIWA in its decision to grant land in trust to UKB, which states that a properly chartered Oklahoma Indian group such as the UKB “enjoy(s) any other rights or privileges secured to an organized Indian tribe under the (IRA)” of 1934.

This would include the right to land in trust.

The Tenth Circuit

upheld the decision, writing that the BIA was “not required” to consider if UKB met the IRA’s definition of “Indian.” Instead, since the UKB is a “recognized tribe or band of Indians residing in Oklahoma” incorporated under OIWA, the BIA “properly concluded that statutory authority exists for the Secretary to take the Subject Parcel into trust for the UKB Corporation.”

The judges were also asked to examine CNO’s assertion that “consent” and not “consultation” was needed before granting trust land to UKB.

CNO argued that explicit consent was needed, claiming they were the historical successors of the original Cherokee Nation and any land in trust within their jurisdiction needed approval.

However, the Tenth Circuit judges cited a 1999 Appropriations Act by Congress that states “no funds shall be used to take land into trust within the boundaries of the original Cherokee territory in Oklahoma without consultation with the Cherokee Nation.”

The ruling did not go so far as to challenge CNO’s claim to successorship, but did further state that “the UKB are descended from the historical Cherokee Indian tribe.”

CNO also argued their

See Land in Trust, page 3

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- UKB wins case against FCC, 5G - Page 6 · Shade joins DOI Solicitor’s Office - Page 7 · Berry recognized by AARP - Page 7
- River Brewhouse has new date - Page 7 · UKB Housing seeks to grow in 2020 - Page 8 · UKB Family Violence Project serves all - Page 8

69th Annual Celebration Guide - #KeetoowahResurgence

The UKB Administration invites all Keetoowahs and the public to join us for the 69th Annual Keetoowah Celebration to be held Oct. 4-5 at the UKB grounds. Pages 4-5 highlight the history of Celebration and why we celebrate, as well as a schedule and map of all events.

Send story ideas by emailing
bbennett@ukb-nsn.gov or calling the
UKB Main Line: 918-871-2800.



facebook.com/
Giduwa Cherokee
News



YouTube
@UKBMedia



Assistant Chief:
Jamie Thompson
(918) 871-2800 ext. 2822



Secretary:
Joyce Hawk
(918) 871-2800 ext. 2767



Treasurer:
Ella Mae Worley
(918) 871-2800 ext. 2818



Canadian:
Eddie Sacks
(918) 822-1957



Cooweescoowee:
Jeannie Tidwell
jtidwell@ukb-nsn.gov



Delaware:
Adalene Smith
(918) 353-5036



Flint:
Frankie Still
(918) 507-1822



Goingsnake:
Sharon Benoit
(918) 507-0726



Illinois:
Peggy Girty
(918) 457-7067



Saline:
Charles Smoke
(918) 457-7071



Sequoyah:
Barry Dotson
(918) 207-2990



Tahlequah:
Jeff Wacoche
(918) 822-2191



Chief Joe Bunch
(918) 871-2800 ext. 2824

Siyo nigada!

We have won land in trust! Our prayers were answered! Thank you, Lord, for this happening. Each and every one of our prayers were answered. It couldn't come at a better time. No doubt about it.

I thank the Proctor administration for the purchase of the land, the Wickliffe administration for the land application and this administration for moving the appeal forward. Thank you all. Thank you, Council.

I also want to acknowledge and name all the attorneys that have been involved with this throughout the years. This has been a 15-year process. The land in trust application took over 15 years to get accomplished, to get to this step. I have heard from folks in Washington D.C. and all over the U.S. congratulating us on this decision.

Thank you to all the attorneys including James McMillen, Christina Vaughn, Klint Cowan, Michael Rossetti, the Department of Justice Attorney Avi Kupfer and the Tenth Circuit Court themselves, otherwise we would not be

Giduwa Cherokee News
Editor: Brittney Bennett
P.O. Box 746
Tahlequah, OK 74465

The Giduwa Cherokee News is mailed free to Keetoowah registered voters, governments, other offices and upon request, to other citizens.

Mail subscription requests and address changes to Giduwa Cherokee News, P.O. Box 746, Tahlequah, OK 74465.

Editorial statements of the Giduwa Cherokee News, guest columns and letters to the editor reflect the opinions of the writer and not necessarily those of the Giduwa Cherokee News editor, staff or tribal administration of the United Keetoowah Band.

All editorials and letters must be 450 words or less and will become the property of the Giduwa Cherokee News. Editorials must be signed and include an address and telephone number. Send all inquires to: Giduwa Cherokee News, P.O. Box 746, Tahlequah, OK 74465.

The Giduwa Cherokee News is the only official publication of the United Keetoowah Band. It operates a Giduwa Cherokee News Facebook page, as well as the tribe's YouTube and Instagram accounts, @UKBMedia. Any other publications or online pages are not an official source of news and are not endorsed by the editor, tribe or tribal administration.

For advertising rates and media inquiries, including permissions to reprint stories within this publication, please email bbennett@ukb-nsn.gov.



From the Chief's Desk: Finally, a Victory for Land In Trust!

announcing this.

One person I do want to recognize completely about this is the former Assistant Secretary of Department of Interior, Larry Echo Hawk for approving our application for land in trust.

We're not out of the woods yet though. There is an appeal process that CNO could ask the Tenth Circuit to review the case and file in the Supreme Court.

In the next couple of weeks CNO will be having a council meeting and I'm sure the removal of the their injunction will be on the agenda, so what I'm asking UKB tribal members, friends of the Keetoowah's and Councilors is to visit with the CNO Council members in your district and advise then not vote for the appeal. This is about helping our people.

The CNO inaugurated Chief Chuck Hoskins Jr. and Deputy Chief Bryan Warner. In the ceremony, Nighthawk Keetoowah Crosslin Smith's prayer for CNO stated a seed is in all of us, that we have it no matter where we are or what we do, He said the seed is love; love for one another. Let us pray that the CNO honor his prayer.

This is not just about land in trust for a casino.

It's about economic development, a catalyst of all else. We can now apply for grants and exercise our sovereignty and self-determination.

On another note, summer is almost over and it is just a little over one month until the 69th Annual UKB Celebration. This year the celebration is October 4-5, 2019. Our program directors and volunteers are working tirelessly to make our Celebration a huge success, especially in light of the current land in trust win.

We have also won in the Appeals Court in Washington D.C. on our case against the Federal Communications Commission.

The justices ruled the FCC failed to consult with Indian tribes in redefining 5G cell tower reviews and removed it from federal undertakings as defined by the National Historical Preservation Act, the Environment Protection Act and executive order requiring federal agencies to consult with Indian tribes before any regulation change that affects Indian tribes.

The cell tower industry is required by federal law to review areas for unmapped burial grounds and artifacts in new construction.

This is a huge win for UKB and Indian Country. By removing the 5G cell tower from the undertakings list, it removed our opportunity for fees gained from consultation with the cell tower industry.

The justices didn't mention anything regarding fees for consultation with Indian Country, but our hope is the industry will continue to notify and consult with tribes.

After all, no one knows better our ancestral burial grounds of our people than Native American tribes.

Also, Oklahoma's tribal gaming compact, which will end on January 1, 2020. Currently, negotiations are taking place for Class III gaming.

If no negotiations are settled on, the compact with the same percentage rolls over for the next 15 years. The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act provides that states and Native American tribes can compact for Las Vegas Style Gaming Devices (games of chance known as Class III).

Tribes met at the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association in July. There is an effort to unify tribes to voice concern over the governor's attempt to renegotiate the rates for gaming compacts.

Presently, the compacts required 10 percent of revenue going to the state fund. The Governor stated he wants more monies going to the state, saying that 20-25 percent of revenue is more appropriate, comparing states with higher rate fees, while some tribes pay no fee to the state.

In Oklahoma, tribes pay all the startup costs and overhead for casinos and Oklahoma receives fees for Class III gaming.

Tribes are preparing to fight this move. Last year the State received over \$100 million in revenue from Oklahoma gaming tribes.

An increase in fees to the gaming compact will be an added burden to small tribes with one casino, as a quarter of the revenue will be going to the state.

In the past our revenue supported the tribal government, emergency funds, elder stipends, college tuition and medical assistance.

Removing a quarter of the revenue would be devastating. I agree with no increase to the fees and signed a letter along with 22 other chiefs that declared us unified.

In closing, my door is always open. You can always reach out to the elected officials as well.

Thank you and God bless the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians.

Do-da-go-hv-i and see you at the Celebration!
Chief Joe Bunch

For more UKB news, visit our only official website at www.ukb-nsn.gov.

Land in Trust, Continued from page 1

1866 treaty guarantees “protection for the Nation against ‘domestic feuds and insurrections’ and ‘hostilities of other tribes,” including the UKB.

The judges said “while the relationship of the UKB and the Nation does not appear friendly, they are neither open enemies nor engaged in warfare.” As such, “no ‘hostilities,’ as contemplated in the 1866 Treaty, attach to the UKB’s land-into-trust application. Accordingly, Nation consent is not required for the BIA to take the Subject Parcel into trust for the UKB.”

The judges also examined whether the BIA gave proper consideration to possible jurisdictional problems that may arise with CNO and UKB, as well as potential conflicts of land use and any administrative burdens on the Interior’s Eastern

Region.

CNO called the decision to move forward with the application “arbitrary and capricious” in regards to these issues.

In their ruling, the judges wrote that “the relatively small size of the Subject Parcel and the fact that BIA services have been provided in the past suggest that any additional administrative burden will not be unreasonable. We reverse the district court’s order holding that the 2011 decision approving the UKB’s land-into-trust application was arbitrary and capricious, an abuse of discretion and otherwise not in accordance with law.”

CNO has the opportunity to appeal to the Supreme Court, but it was unclear as of press time if it plans to do so.

The Certiorari Act of 1925 gives the Supreme Court the discretion to decide whether

or not to hear cases at all. On average, the Supreme Court agrees to only hear about 100-150 of the 7,000 cases that it is asked to review each year.

For now, UKB Secretary Joyce Hawk is looking ahead positively and said the decision will have immediate impacts on the tribe’s financial situation.

“With trust land, it’s kind of like restricted land. You don’t have to pay property taxes, all that goes away,” she said. “It was fee simple land, so we’ve been paying property taxes. Now we’ll no longer have to, so that’s substantial savings for the tribe. We’ll also try to retroactive it back if possible.”

Bunch said the ruling also means “opportunities” are on the horizon for the UKB.

“It’s the opportunity that’s there. It’s the ability to apply for and receive grants

that have criteria such as land in trust,” he said. “Next on the charts are health, education and welfare as we go for all of those for our people. Land in trust is just a springboard, it’s the mechanism that propels us further into those federal program dollars for the different activities that come along.”

Also at the Sept. 5 press conference was former UKB Chief John Hair, 87, who spoke on the historic occasion to a room full of Keetoowah employees. He maybe summed up the situation best.

“My heart, my soul, my whole being is at ease. I feel so good today that there’s better things coming because of this decision,” he said. “I’m glad I’m here to hear all this. Council, I want you to carry on. We still have work to do, but it should be easier from this point on.”

UKB Tribal Council announces sanctions at August meeting

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

TAHLEQUAH - During its August 3 meeting, the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians Tribal Council announced that the tribe is now on Level 2 sanctions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Office of Self-Governance. It also recognized and gave its blessing to create the first UKB Ambassadors Committee.

UKB Chief Joe Bunch announced during his address that the UKB has been placed on Level 2 sanctions by the BIA and the Office of Self-Governance for failing to submit its FY17 and FY18 audits.

“Since (being informed), we’ve engaged several folks with our audits,” said Bunch. “We’re on the verge of getting our first one complete. I can’t give you a timeline, because when you’re dealing with the numbers and the magnitude of numbers, it takes a little while.”

The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) requires that: “For each fiscal year during which an Indian tribal organization receives or expends funds pursuant to a contract entered into, or grant made, under this subchapter, the tribal organization that requested such contract or grant shall submit to the appropriate Secretary a single-agency audit report required by chapter 75 of Title 31.”

These annual audits assure the agency that monies given to tribes like the UKB for “self-governance programs” are being spent properly. The UKB currently operates several programs with self-governance funds including programs under Indian Child Welfare, Roads and Transportation, Social Welfare and Enrollment.

If a tribe fails to submit

an annual audit, OSG federal guidelines dictate it to place the tribe on Level 1 sanctions. This limits the tribe to receiving federal funds in advanced monthly payments until the late audits have been submitted.

Tribes are escalated up to Level 2 sanctions if two consecutive audits have not been turned into the OSG in a timely manner. Consequences of Level 2 sanctions include additional limited money drawdowns and the withholding of all contract support payments until the audits are submitted to the OSG office.

Should the tribe fail to deliver audits for more than two consecutive years, the OSG is required to place the tribe on Level 3 sanctions. Consequences of Level 3 sanctions include the OSG ceasing all funds to the tribe and reassuming the leadership of distribution of its federal funding for programs to the tribe.

Bunch indicated that the tribe has several individuals working on completing the audits so Level 3 sanctions are avoided.

“We’ve engaged Finley and Cook. We’ve engaged a former CPA, which was our comptroller at one time. We’ve engaged our own staff and we’ve also went back to Stanfield and O’Dell to get worksheets and things of this nature,” he said.

“We’re in the process of doing that. Once FY17 is completed, we’ll move to FY18 and complete that. Then we should have enough time to be caught up with FY19 by June of next year.”

Executive Assistant to the Chief Travis Wolfe also spoke during the meeting, once more asking approval for an Ambassadors Committee to

support the Jr. Miss Keetoowah and Miss Keetoowah positions.

The item was originally tabled at the August council meeting.

Wolfe’s original proposal noted that it was “unknown if there was ever a committee for the ambassadors before.”

As such, it asked to create a sanctioned committee that would “allow a greater presence of the ambassadors, the possibility of acquiring grants for the ambassadors and committee, the possibility of acquiring a non-profit 501c3 for the committee and enrich UKB communities thereby enriching the tribe.”

Wolfe indicated that up until the August meeting, a group of seven individuals had been working to support the ambassadors as an “unofficial committee.”

“We can still operate in that capacity, but we wanted to extend the offer to council to have an official committee,” he said. “There’s nothing governing the girls themselves. We’re still going to act, but we would like the permission of the council. We would like the support of the council because they are the ambassadors of the tribe.”

Councilor Jeannie Tidwell made a motion to strike the item, with Charles Smoke giving the motion a second before withdrawing his support.

Treasurer Ella Mae Worley then gave the motion a second.

“I really don’t, just my opinion, I really don’t feel a committee needs to be formed at this time,” Tidwell said. “We may look at it further on down the road, but at this time I don’t think it’s appropriate. Everybody is stressed to the max. I think we need to hold off on this. I’m not

saying it can’t happen at a later time. I think if we can continue and hold on just a little bit and we can work on getting something in place for next year.”

Councilor Sharon Benoit also weighed in on the proposed committee.

“You’re asking for structure and organization. I can understand where you’re coming from and I can understand wanting to organize and be organized so people know what they’re supposed to do when they come into that,” she said.

After several more minutes of council discussion, UKB Attorney General Clint Cowan stepped in to clarify that a 2005 ordinance simply required the Council to “recognize the committee” for it to be official.

“In the documents I received from your last attorney general, there is a reference to a 2005 ordinance governing committees. It’s called UKB Bylaws Governing Committees. I don’t know if that exists. I didn’t get a copy of the actual document, just a reference to it. If that exists, all you would need to do is recognize the committee as an official committee,” he said.

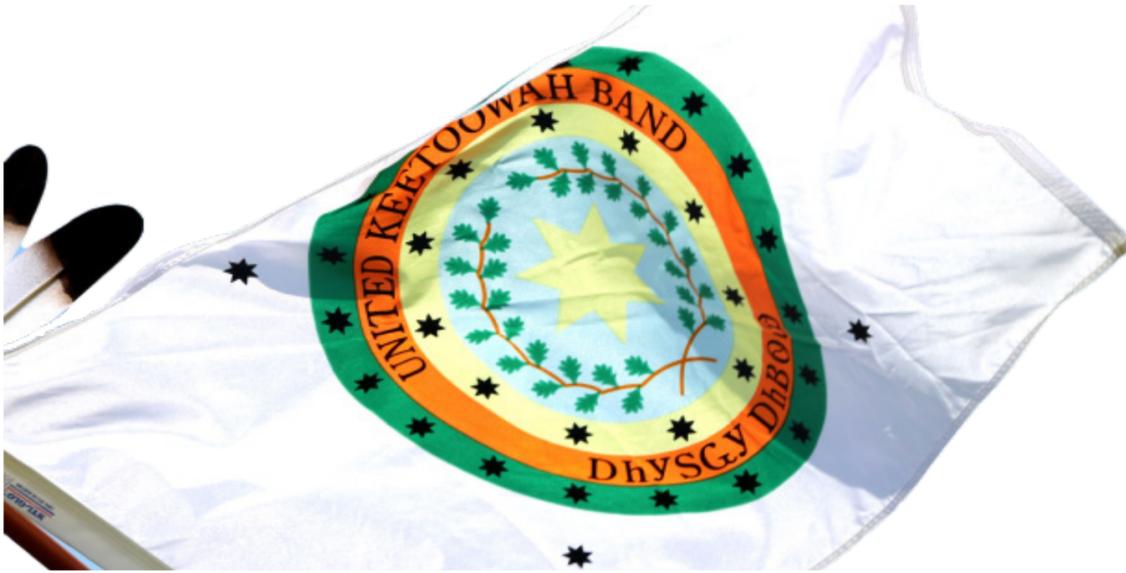
Councilors ended the discussion by officially recognizing the committee with its blessing.

Also during the meeting it was announced that the Elder Committee meetings have been moved to the third Monday of every month at 5:30 p.m. at the John Hair Cultural Center and Museum.

The next scheduled Council meeting was on Saturday, Sept. 7.

Coverage of that meeting will be in the October issue of the Giduwa Cherokee News.

“Keetoowah Resurgence” celebrates 69 years of Constitution, Bylaws



BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

TAHLEQUAH – The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma administration invites both its tribal members and members of the public to partake in our 69th Annual “Keetoowah Resurgence” Celebration activities to be held Oct. 4-5 in Tahlequah.

“We’ve gone through a couple different edits of Celebration’s theme this year,” said Executive Assistant to the Chief Travis Wolfe. “Our first initial theme we decided on early in the year was ‘Resurgence.’ As

we went along, it seemed like we were questioning it a little, like ‘exactly what are we resurging from?’ Now our historical land in trust win reaffirms the ‘Resurgence’ theme. This is a reason to celebrate. It is more important than ever for all Keetoowahs and Keetoowah advocates to come together and make this celebration something grand.”

Celebration’s history stems from a vote that took place on October 3, 1950.

The vote was to approve the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians constitution and bylaws as they had been sub-

mitted on May 8, 1950 to the Assistant Secretary of the Interior William E. Warne.

The seven-page document reads: “We the members of the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma, in order to promote our common welfare and to secure to ourselves and our posterity the rights, powers and privileges authorized and offered by the Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of June 26, 1936 and the Act of August 10, 1946, do hereby ordain and establish the following constitution and bylaws.”

The vote, which required

at least 30 percent of eligible Keetoowah voters to cast their ballots, ended with 1,414 in favor and one against.

Its approval cemented the constitution and bylaws of the United Keetoowah Band, which has now been the foundation of the tribe for 69 years.

To celebrate the historic occasion, Celebration has been held each year during the first weekend in October.

Wolfe said Celebration has been and will always be about the people.

“Without the people, we are not Giduwa,” he said. “All of our different Keetoowah bands came together and became united and this is what solidifies our existence as a people, this one particular day a year we call ‘Celebration.’ I encourage everyone to come out, not just Keetoowahs. If you’re Creek, if you’re Kiowa, if you’re Cherokee Nation. Our families live in the same households and we would be honored to have your love and support.”

All are encouraged to take photos and video during the Celebration and tag @UKBMedia on Instagram or use #KeetoowahResurgence on any social media platform.

Miss, Jr. Miss Keetoowah to retain crowns until 2020



Miss Keetoowah Koley Boyd will reign from 2018-2020. During her time, she said she wants to focus her platform on Native American children in foster care. BRITTNEY BENNETT/GCN

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

TAHLEQUAH - After a decision by the newly created United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians Ambassadors Committee, Jr. Miss Keetoowah Destinee Kingfisher-Wolfe and Miss Keetoowah Koley Boyd will retain their crowns for one more year beginning this October.

“This essentially means the tribe will not hold a Jr. Miss and Miss Keetoowah Pageant as part of its Celebration Activities,” said Travis Wolfe, UKBAC vice-chairman.

“We understand there may be some disappointment regarding the lack of a pageant, but I don’t see that as a detriment to us. We extended the reign because of our belief that it would be more feasible for these girls to spend another year obtaining a better understanding of what a true ambassador’s role is.”

Wolfe explained that there has never been an Ambassador Committee to help

guide the ambassadors along. As such, the extension also gives the current ambassadors a chance to do more in their second year under structured leadership.

“This will put in place more structure for the girls, more chaperones and more opportunities for them. The first year is very fresh for them and introducing them to the community regarding their professional persona. The second year they will really work on a project together and develop their platform as young women representing the tribe.”

The current Miss Keetoowah is Koley Boyd, 19. Boyd was crowned on September 28, 2018 in Tahlequah. She said she wants to use the extra year to reach out more to the community.

“It’s pretty exciting,” said Boyd. “I was talking to my mom about how I didn’t really have as much opportunity as I would like to this year. Now, I have a free semester and I’ll have a lot of opportunities in the next few months to plan for things. I’ll try to be pretty busy this year. I’m looking at different kinds of

fundraisers I want to do to raise money for kids in foster care. The children are our future.”

Native American children in foster care is her current platform and is a cause that hits very close to home for her.

“The reason why I wanted to shine a light on the foster care system is because I was in it at one time,” said Boyd. “It traumatized me but overall, it did touch me and I want to be vocal about it.”

Boyd said she is proud to represent her tribe and will take her duties seriously.

“To me, being Miss Keetoowah means I can get us out there and show people we are here,” she said. “I always have to inform people about UKB. I just really means a lot to me to get our name out there.”

The current Jr. Miss Keetoowah is Destinee Kingfisher-Wolfe, 17. She was crowned on September 28, 2018 in Tahlequah.

She said she is most excited about reaching more Keetoowah youth in her second year.

“I’m very excited to be going for two years. What I want to do in this coming year is to change

up how I approach our youth and do more events. I think people need to realize that our culture is still here,” she said.

Kingfisher-Wolfe’s platform is bullying, a cause also personal to her after children at her school did not understand her Keetoowah heritage.

“When I was in 5th grade, I was getting bullied not only because of my size, but also because I was different than the other kids,” she said. “I got bullied so much, my mom had to take me out of there and home school me for two years. Since then, my mom told me that it is OK to be different and they don’t understand how we were raised.”

Through her position, she is taking back pride in her heritage and hopes to also educate others about the Keetoowahs.

“Being Jr. Miss Keetoowah means I have the opportunity to be vocal about my culture,” she said. “I know a lot and this gives me a chance to educate people who have no idea who Native Americans are. My heart is in this and I just love being UKB.”



Jr. Miss Keetoowah Destinee Kingfisher-Wolfe will reign from 2018-2020. During her time, she said she wants to focus her platform on bullying and educating others about the Keetoowah culture. BRITTNEY BENNETT/GCN

“Keetoowah Resurgence” Schedule of Events



FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4

Softball Tournament 7 p.m. - October 4-6 Sequoyah Ball Fields

This year’s softball tournament will have men and women’s divisions, as well as a 7-3 coed slowpitch division. The tournament is a 15-man roster.

Prizes for 1st place are hoodies, 2nd place receives long-sleeve t-shirts and 3rd place receives t-shirts.

Entry fee is \$150. Deadline to enter is 9/27 at 9 p.m. Questions can be directed to Jeff Wacoche at 918-822-2191 or by email to jwacoche@ukb-nsn.gov. Money is due at time of entry. Cash or money order can be mailed to P.O. Box 746 Tahlequah, OK 74465. Please address to UKB Tribal Council, Attn: Jeff Wacoche.

Stomp Dance - 7 p.m. Keetoowah Stomp Grounds

The 69th Annual Celebration festivities are not complete without our annual Stomp Dance at the Keetoowah Stomp Grounds near the UKB Wellness Center.

Keetoowahs are traditionally a stomp dance culture and dance to cleanse their bodies and practice good medicine. This event will be more of a social event giving the public, our tribal members and the invited ceremonial grounds an opportunity to come together for an evening of cultural fellowship.

Dancing will begin at 8 p.m. and go to midnight. A free chili dinner at the stomp grounds will be provided prior to the event at 7 p.m. while food lasts.

Chief’s Dinner (Invitation Only) 7 p.m. - Elder Center

UKB Chief Joe Bunch

will host an invitation only dinner for various dignitaries and UKB partners. The event is meant to promote our strength in our relationships with those in the community.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

Children’s Fishing Derby 8:30 a.m. - Keetoowah Pond

The Children’s Fishing Derby will be for children ages 14 and under. It is a bring your own fishing pole event and prizes will be awarded for first, second and third place.

Official Welcome 9:30 a.m. - Pavilion

An official welcome to the celebration activities will be given by M.C. Ronnie Livers. During the introduction John Hair Cultural Center and Museum Director Ernestine Berry will also give a presentation on the history of the Keetoowah people and the significance of Celebration itself.

Food and Vendors 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Please refer to map for designated areas.

Various vendors selling their wares and food will be on hand for the duration of the day. Please stop in to see them and maybe find something new!

Gospel Singing 10 a.m. - Pavilion

Songs of Praise will provide live entertainment with an array of religious songs for Celebration goers.

Tournament Registration 10 a.m. - Celebration opening

Registration will take place near the opening of the grounds for the volleyball and horseshoe tournaments. Volleyball registration is \$70 per

team, with 12 teams maximum. Winner takes half the pot.

Horseshoe registration for singles is \$5, while teams are \$10. Winners will take half the pot.

Tournaments begin

11 a.m. - Designated areas
Both the volleyball and horseshoe tournaments will start at 11 a.m. Please refer to the map.

Cornstalk Shoot *tentative 11 a.m. Please refer to map.

The cornstalk shoot is a traditional game once played between Keetoowah hunters and warriors to improve bow and arrow accuracy when hunting. To protect their arrows, Keetoowahs would shoot their arrows into bales of dried cornstalk. Come give your hand a try!

HLDCDC Children’s Activities 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. - CDC

The Henry Lee Double-head Child Development Center will offer children a variety of activities throughout the day including turtle races, face painting and bouncy houses. Food will also be provided.

State of the Band 12 p.m. - Pavilion

An official welcome to the celebration activities will be given by former Miss Keetoowah and M.C. Victoria Proctor.

UKB Chief Joe Bunch will also give his annual address about the state of the Keetoowah band and thank our partners for their sponsorship. The theme of “Keetoowah Resurgence” will also be discussed.

Free Feed 1 p.m. - Pavilion

The UKB employees and volunteers will come together at 1 p.m. to help distribute the free feed. The meal will consist of a

plate of hog meat, fry bread, potatoes and beans.

Stickball Exhibition 2 p.m. - UKB stickball field

Stickball is known amongst Keetoowahs as “the little brother of war.” Played in ancient times and carried on into today, the game of stickball was used once to settle disputes.

This event will feature red and black teams, with the host team being the Nighthawks.

Social Stickball 3 p.m. - UKB Stickball Field

This social stickball game provides anyone interested the opportunity to take the field in a more relaxed setting where players will use sticks to hit a fish located on top of a pole. Women are allowed to use their hands.

Players do play at their own risk and some sticks will be provided.

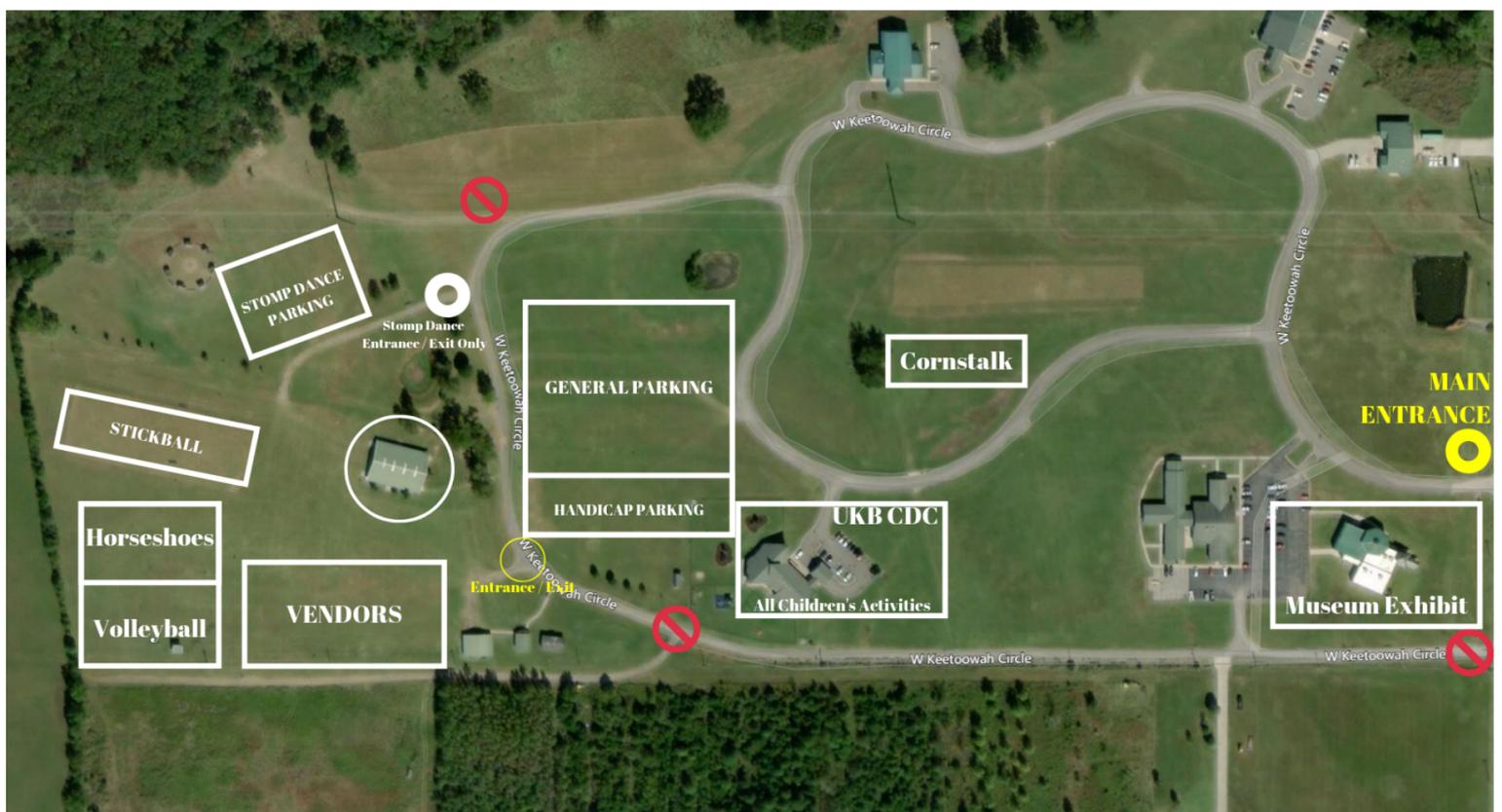
Full Blood Entertainment 5 p.m. - Pavilion

Our partner Full Blood Entertainment will be bringing with them a variety of live acts for Celebration including Rod Robertson and Mike Bone. Additional entertainment is expected, but the info was not available as of press time.

50 & Over Legends Game 7 p.m. - Sequoyah Ball Fields

As part of this year’s softball tournament, a Legends Game will be held for those 50 and older.

There is no entry fee, though those wishing to participate must submit their name to the player’s list by contacting Jeff Wacoche at 918-822-2191 or email jwacoche@ukb-nsn.gov.



Projected 2019 Celebration Map

UKB wins critical case against FCC, 5G deployment

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In a win for the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled August 9 that the Federal Communications Commission must uphold tribal consultation requirements for small 5G cell tower deployments.

“Not only is this a victory for our tribe, but it’s a victory for all tribes and American Indians across the nation,” said UKB Chief Joe Bunch.

“For us, it’s a tremendous ruling. It ensures that our ancestors remains will be kept and the environment will remain intact as well. We will continue to fight for our ancestors and our historical remains and sites to move our tribe forward.”

UKB, along with more than 20 other joining tribes, gave oral arguments against the FCC on March 15, 2019 in Washington D.C. after officials say the agency attempted to “exclude” tribal consultation requirements on its 5G projects.

The case specifically asked the courts to halt the FCC’s Wireless Infrastructure Streamlining Order, which was passed with a 3-2 FCC vote in

September 2018.

In the order, the FCC ruled it could deploy thousands of cellular wireless antennae for 5G capabilities across the U.S. without meeting tribal consultation review requirements because the projects were not defined as “undertakings” under the National Historic Preservation Act or “major Federal actions” under the National Environmental Policy Act.

NHPA was enacted in 1966 to preserve historical and archaeological sites in the U.S. if they were located in construction sites. NEPA was enacted in 1970 and requires federal agencies to determine any environmental effects that could happen as a result of a proposed project.

The FCC argued these types of reviews by tribes, commonly known as Section 106 reviews, “would impede the advance of 5G networks and that its costs outweighed any benefits.”

It also justified bypassing NHPA and NEPA regulations because 5G antennae are less than 200 feet in height, won’t be located near an airport and their construction is not subject to the agency’s “limited approval authority.” The agency cited that the “small” nature of the proj-

ects “appears to render them inherently unlikely to trigger environmental and historic preservation concerns.”

The appeals court did not agree, calling the deregulation “arbitrary and capricious” because it “did not adequately address the harms of deregulation or justify its portrayal of those harms as negligible.” Instead, the FCC “failed to justify its confidence that small cell deployments pose little to no cognizable religious, cultural, or environmental risk, particularly given the vast number of proposed deployments.”

The opinion states that “tribes’ views must be taken into account where the agreement has the potential to affect historic properties on tribal lands or historic properties of religious and cultural significance to an Indian tribe.”

However the ruling does prohibit tribes from asking for upfront fees before initiating the Section 106 process, which FCC entities had been doing before the ruling. Instead, fees charged by a tribe must be made after the process begins.

The ruling also shortens the time that tribes have to respond to Tower Construction Notification System notifica-

tions.

Regardless, Scott Sypolt with Akerman LLP, who argued on behalf of UKB, called the case a “critical win.”

“As the lead litigating attorney in this case, it was a complex battle but a critical win for all of Indian Country,” he said. “It is critical to all of Indian Country because this decision unequivocally decides that federal agencies must consult with Indian Tribes on a sovereign nation to sovereign nation platform. This gives tribes leverage regarding their notification rights and tribal participation as it relates to the FCC, but the decision has a far-reaching impact on the future relations tribes will have with other federal agencies.”

It is unclear as of press time if the ruling was retroactive in respect to any consulting fees for projects that had yet to be paid to tribes before the case made its way into court.

Bunch extended his gratitude to the UKB Tribal Council for their support throughout the process.

“I thank the Tribal Council for their unwavering fortitude and for their approval to take this measure on in the courts.”

EDITOR’S ADDRESS

Come Celebrate with Us!



Editor Brittney Bennett
bbennett@ukb-nsn.gov
918-871-2756

Siyo from your editor!

This month, we have so much to be thankful for as Keetoowahs. We did it! We won our land in trust.

I am honored that I am here to write you this story as the editor for the Giduwa Cherokee News.

I know I do not

know we belonged here and I hope this decision can begin healing between our people and that of CNO.

speaking just for myself when I write that this has been a long, challenging, hard-fought journey to being recognized as equals in our own lands.

I’m excited for what comes next for our tribal members and know you are too!

But first, I want us to celebrate this win together. As Keetoowahs we have gone through the highs and lows from one court decision to the next.

You have remained loyal with us and we hope

to see you out as a way of us saying “wado” for your patience.

I encourage you to celebrate this historic decision with us at our 69th Annual Celebration Oct. 4-5. I will be out and about, so stop and say, “Siyo!”

Wado!
Brittney Bennett

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Title VI Jim Proctor Elder Nutrition Center - September

All UKB elders 55 and older plus their spouse can eat free at the Jim Proctor Elder Nutrition Center.

CDIB holders 55 and older plus spouse must contribute to cost of meal.

The Jim Proctor Elder Nutrition Center is for seniors only. Any guests under 55 must pay \$5 and children 0-17 are \$3.

Title VI alerts elders to be safe and please consume, refrigerate or dispose of meal within two hours or keep cool 40 degrees or reheat to 160 degrees.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE***	2 UKB TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED 	3 "BINGO" 55+ Spaghetti & Meat Balls Green Beans Garlic Toast Apple Turnover	4 "Vegetarian Day" Chef Salad Potato Soup Club Crackers Fruit Dessert	5 Frito Chile Pie w/Fixings Zucchini Sticks Salad Fruit Salad	6 Turkey/Cheese Sandwich w/Fixings Tatar Tots Fruit Dessert	7 UKB Regular Council Meeting 10 AM Jim Proctor Elder Community Center
8 Lunch Hours Monday-Friday 11:30 AM- 1:00 PM Unless specified on Menu	9 Tuna Salad on Wheat Potato Chips Broccoli Salad Melon Mix	10 Homemade Meatloaf Potato w/Green Beans Hot Roll Salad Fruit Dessert	11 BBQ Brisket on Bun Potato Chips Corn on Cob Apple Cake	12 Indian Taco w/Fixings Picante Sauce Sour Cream Strawberries Ice Cream	13 Grilled Hot Dogs on Bun w/Fixings Pork N Beans Potato Salad Watermelon	14 "Flower Aster"
15 918-871-2860 918-871-2806 918-871-2861	16 Hamburger Veggie Stew Hominy Combread Fruit Dessert	17 BP/BS Angels Care Baked Chicken Potatoes w/Green Beans Salad, Bread Fruit Dessert	18 Stuffed Peppers Rice Pilaf Sweet Peas/Carrots Bread Fruit Dessert	19 BLT on Wheat w/Fixings Tomato Soup Crackers Fruit Dessert	20 Sloppy Joe Tatar Tots Salad Fresh Banana Dessert	21
	22 "Autumn Begins" Baked Potato w/Fixings Broccoli Salad Crackers Fruit Dessert	23 Chicken Strips Mashed Potato/Gravy Green Beans Bread Fruit Dessert	24 Catfish w/Tatar Sauce Baked Steak Fries Coleslaw Fruit Dessert	25 "BINGO 10 AM 55+" September Birthdays Hamburgers w/Fixings, F. Fries, Baked Beans Birthday Cake, Ice Cream	26 KITCHEN CLOSED CLEANING DAY	27
28 PLEASE CHECK ON YOUR ELDER AND NEIGHBORS WA-DO	29 TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED				Inclment Weather Policy- When Tahlequah Schools Are Closed – Nutrition Center May Be Closed Due to Weather	Inclment Weather Policy- If weather is bad there will be no home delivered meals due to safety of our driver.

Nutrition Analysis Includes: 2% milk. Each meal meets 1/3 of the recommended RDA requirements.

Shade joins DOI Solicitor's Office as attorney



United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians tribal member Bryan Shade, far left, and his family have experienced a number of changes since Shade accepted a job with the DOI. His wife Jennifer, far right, also accepted a new position with Indian Health Services. COURTESY

D.C. - United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians Tahlequah District tribal member Bryan Shade recently joined the Department of the Interior in Washington, DC as an attorney in the Solicitor's Office.

ney in the Solicitor's Office.

The Solicitor's Office is the Department of the Interior's primary office for legal counsel.

Shade is a 2016 graduate of the University of Arkansas School

of Law in Fayetteville, Arkansas. He also holds a Masters degree in Business Administration (MBA) from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah.

"I work in the Division of Indian Affairs and the Branch of Self-Governance and Economic Development. Our division works on a wide variety of issues that directly impact Tribes and tribal communities. We advise the Secretary and Assistant Secretary on issues arising from the federal trust responsibility. It is extremely rewarding and meaningful work where you can see quickly how your efforts impact Indian Country."

Prior to attending law school, Shade served the UKB in various roles including Federal Programs Director and Executive Director of Tribal Operations.

Most recently, Shade served as interim Executive CIO and Self-Governance General Counsel with the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma before accepting the opportunity with the Department of the Interior.

Shade's wife, Jennifer, a Choctaw Nation citizen, joined the Indian Health Service in the Scholarship Office at IHS headquarters in Rockville, Maryland.

Prior to joining the Indian Health Service, she worked with the College of Science and Health Professions at Northeastern State University and previously worked in the Infectious Disease Clinic at Hastings Indian Medical Center. She holds a Masters of Business Administration with emphasis in Healthcare Administration.

Bryan and Jennifer have two daughters, Makayla and Savannah.

Berry to receive 2019 AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honor award

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

OKLAHOMA CITY – United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians tribal member Ernestine Berry has been selected as an honoree for the 2019 AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honors.

She was nominated for the award by fellow Keetoowahs Georgia Mauldin and Rebecca Dreadfulwater.

"I knew they were going to nominate me, but had no thought that I would be selected," said Berry. "I was very surprised but pleased to be chosen as an outstanding Native American Elder in Oklahoma. But even more, I am happy to be working with and for the United Keetoowah Band. I hope I can be a worthy representative of my beloved Keetoowah People."

According to AARP, the award "is one of AARP

Oklahoma's most prestigious and visible awards, given to recognize outstanding Native American Elders who are making a powerful difference in their communities, and Indian Country, in ways that are consistent with AARP's mission and vision, and who inspire others to service."

Berry will accept her award at the 11th Annual AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honors banquet on October 1 at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum.

In addition to being a UKB Tradition Keeper and having served as a former tribal secretary and Giduwa Cherokee News editor, Berry currently runs the John Hair Cultural Center and Museum as its director.

To visit or schedule a tour with Berry at the JHCCM, call 918-871-2866 or email her at eberry@ukb-nsn.gov.



United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians tribal member Ernestine Berry will accept her award at the 11th Annual AARP Oklahoma Indian Elder Honors banquet on October 1 at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. COURTESY

BUSINESS

The River Brewhouse gets new opening date

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

TAHLEQUAH – At its August 30 meeting, the UKB Corporate Board announced the opening of the tribe's newest business venture, The River Brewhouse, was once more delayed.

"The new goal would be later October or early November," said Randall Hendricks, Corporate Board director.

The brewhouse has seen several delays, which Hendricks noted last month.

"We do apologize for the delay in opening. With every major build like this comes unforeseen circumstances and things happening that you just can't plan for. However, we are doing our best to manage and mitigate those delays and we're working as fast as possible to get the brewpub

open."

Corporate Board Chairman Jamie Thompson also commented on the delay at the August 30 meeting.

"Our goal is to complete it and get it up and running," he said. "Our plan was September obviously, but apparently that's not going to be. Any successful person will tell you your goals are in concrete, but your plans are in sand. What that means is they change. They're working hard over there."

The River Brewhouse will feature custom brews, food and sports betting under one roof when it opens in the former Keetoowah administration building next to Walmart in Tahlequah. Demolition began on April 11.

It will also become the largest brewhouse in Oklahoma and measure 6,200-square feet with

a max occupancy of 265 people. A ground floor and mezzanine area will boast a rustic look when completed.

The River Brewhouse has partnered with Broken Arrow Brewery for the endeavor and is working to coordinate all parties involved to finish the project.

For Phase I, The River Brewhouse will offer four custom drinks including an Amber beer, a pilsner, an IPA and a lager or an ale, according to Hendricks.

"There's going to be four different types, so there's something for everyone," he said. "They're going to develop our signature brews. After we hit Phase II and we're up and running, we're going to hook our tanks up and start our training process. We'll slowly phase out the Broken Arrow Brewery logo and they're go-

ing to transition us into being our own brand."

In addition to custom brews, The River Brewhouse will have smaller food items that were once offered at the old Keetoowah Casino including hamburgers, fries, hot dogs and nachos.

Sports betting will take place throughout the building, including on the biggest screen in Oklahoma, said Hendricks.

"We're going to have big screens everywhere and Bet4 Technologies is bringing in their software. There's going to be centrally located kiosks at the tables to utilize to place bets."

For those unfamiliar with sports betting, Hendricks said individuals can place bets on "minute" details of sporting events.

Part of the profits from the business will go back to the tribe.



UKB Housing retreat talks growth in 2020

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

DURANT – The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians Housing Department reflected on its previous year of work, discussed setting new goals for program growth and outlined how it plans to provide more services to tribal members in 2020 during an August 7 retreat with its employees.

“This is a time for us to go through our policies and procedures that we’ve worked hard on in the past year. We’ll look at policies that worked for us and didn’t work for us,” said Assistant Housing Director Charles Deason.

From 2018-2019, the Housing Department assisted tribal members in various ways including with five storm shelters, 71 instances of emergency rental assistance, approving 11 students for college housing assistance, as well as building two replacement homes and an elder cottage.

The department is now looking ahead to fiscal year 2020, which begins Oct. 1.

Projected plans include two elder cottage homes, as

well as 17 home rehabilitations. The rehabilitations include up to 5 major rehabs, 10 minor emergency repairs up to \$5,000 and two replacement homes should families need more work done than the home is worth.

The Housing Department is also focused in the coming year on better advertising its Down Payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program.

“On the Down Payment Closing Cost Program, we didn’t have any applicants last year. That’s a really good opportunity there and our members need to take advantage of it,” said Housing Director Nanci McCause.

The program will provide a forgivable grant of up to \$25,000 towards the purchase of a residence for exclusive UKB tribal members that are at least 18 years old and first-time homeowners.

Applicants must have already identified a home for purchase and secured a loan through a bank, while also qualifying as a low-income household not exceeding 80 percent of the national median income as set by HUD.

“We’re going to make it easier on them to apply, but if you are going to apply, you al-

ready need to have already found a house and received a bank loan approval before you ask us. It saves a lot of time,” said McCause.

Amanda Proctor, one of two speakers invited to the retreat, called the program her “favorite.”

“It was my favorite program as a housing director,” she said. “The work that’s involved in the Housing Department compared to the benefit to the tribal member is minimal. We don’t have to do a lot of work to make this program operate and tribal members have a home.”

Proctor has degrees from both Harvard and the University of Tulsa Law School. Her expertise includes drafting Indian Housing Plans and revising policies for tribal housing programs, including UKB.

She herself has utilized a down payment assistance program through her own tribe, in conjunction with a U.S. Housing and Urban Development loan known as the Section 184 Indian Home Loan Guarantee Program.

Section 184 has existed for more than two decades and is Native American-specific, offering tribal members the opportunity to obtain a home loan that isn’t credit-score based.

The loan is also a program

Members of the UKB Housing Department and administration posed for a picture with Nancy Bainbridge, front second from left, and Amanda Proctor, far right, during their retreat. **BRITTNEY BENNETT/GCN**

the Housing Department may be looking to pursue in the coming years for tribal members, which is also why the department invited Nancy Bainbridge as its other guest speaker for the retreat.

Bainbridge is currently the senior vice-president and tribal and construction loan officer for Bank2, which is 100 percent owned by the Chickasaw Nation. Her expertise includes utilizing the Section 184 Home Loan.

“There’s a lot to it and once the tribe decides what to do with it and what direction it wants to go in, you can put more detail into it,” said Bainbridge. “It is not credit-scored. They’re looking for willingness and ability to pay.”

Not only is it flexible for individuals, but the tribe could also utilize it in a variety of ways, according to Bainbridge.

“Using the HUD 184 program you can build employee housing. You can even build quadruplexes with this because it has no income restrictions. I’ve worked with one tribe who is even looking at the loan as a way to build senior-assisted living. It’s a very flexible program,” she said.

McCause noted that the program will not be feasible for the tribe until its audits are in order, but that she remains positive.

“Once these audits get finished, we’re going to be in a position to pursue this. We didn’t try it last year because we knew we weren’t there, but we’re going to get there and I have faith in that.”

UKB Family Violence Project assists members, public

BY BRITTNEY BENNETT

TAHLEQUAH – United Keetoowah Band tribal members and members of the public that are victims of family and domestic violence can seek safety planning, financial support and referral services through the UKB Family Violence Project.

The program is under Health and Human Services Director Jennifer Cole-Robinson. “This program is designed to help victims of family violence and domestic violence, as well as elder abuse and intimate partner violence including sexual assault,” she said.

Cole-Robinson highlighted the need for a program like the UKB Family Violence Project in Indian Country.

“This is a huge issue because unfortunately we have a lot of violence that is not reported,” she said. “Our tribal members have experienced violence in their lives and then law enforcement is called in, but they might never see anything moving forward in an investigation. It’s not always the fault of law enforcement, but there are serious crimes that continue to go on.”

To assist victims of these crimes, the UKB Health and Human Services staff provide a variety of services

including creating a safety plan.

“We tell them about several things they need to start to gather,” said Cole-Robinson. “Start gathering important documents like your social security cards, your driver’s license, birth certificates. If you can, start setting aside a little bit of money so that you can have some other money to live on as part of an emergency fund. Develop a safety plan with your family, so when you decide to leave, your family knows you’re safe.”

The project also offers victims help with navigating the legal system.

“We offer court accompaniment if they want to seek a protective order,” said Cole-Robinson. “If there are criminal charges involved because of violence we will also accompany them to criminal court hearings. Far too often I have seen victims not receive justice because they are not comfortable moving forward, so I hope we can start addressing and educating our communities on what family violence is and start holding abusers accountable.”

Other services covered under the UKB Family Violence Project include gas vouchers to go to counseling, referrals for shelter stays and deposits for housing.

“We can do referrals to get them into domestic violence

shelters. If those are full, we can find them a hotel to stay in until they can get into the shelter,” said Cole-Robinson. “We also assist when victims are leaving the relationship or shelter. We can assist with deposits with housing and first month’s rent.”

The project also assists victims with completing Oklahoma Victim’s Compensation paperwork, which can help with medical bills if a police report is filed.

The issue of intimate partner and family violence often isn’t just physical.

“The biggest misconception that I have encountered in working in this field for 22 years is that people believe domestic violence and family violence is only physical abuse. It’s not about anger, it’s not about losing control, it is all about power control,” said Cole-Robinson. “If you start seeing family members or friends that are in what I term an ‘unhealthy relationship,’ signs include no access to the checkbook. There’s a lot of emotional abuse with name calling or putting someone down or making someone feel like a situation is their fault.”

The reasons victims choose to stay or leave can also be difficult for support systems to understand.

“On average, a victim leaves the relationship seven times before they make the final deci-

sion. In Native relationships, what I have noticed is that it’s about 13 times,” said Cole-Robinson.

“Support systems can become very frustrated, but what they do not realize is there are other factors that can cause someone to go back. Sometimes it’s for their own safety because they know where their abuser is. The other is community and having to leave their ceremonial grounds.”

Support systems can also underestimate the emotions behind the relationship.

“The other simple fact is that they love them. We underestimate that love a lot,” said Cole-Robinson. “We forget that it’s a loss of a relationship, they’re grieving a loss of the person that they loved, their home, community, their job. You have to grieve.”

While the work can be challenging, Cole-Robinson is grateful for the program.

“I’m relieved that we have the program under Health and Human Services because in my experience, victims of violence respond better to people of their own tribe, of their own community and they’re more comfortable in disclosing what’s going on,” she said. “Having a tribal program, I’m excited because it gives an opportunity to talk about it and address it in our communities.”