



YO HASINAI!

OFFICAL NEWS FROM THE CADDO NATION OF OKLAHOMA

Fall 2024 Issue No. 2

Charting a New Course: Caddo Nation's Path to Economic Prosperity and Stability

In a recent interview, Caddo Nation Council Secretary Jennifer Reeder shared insights into the tribe's ongoing efforts to secure a prosperous and stable future for all Caddo citizens. Reeder's vision encompasses both economic development and constitutional reform, emphasizing the importance of tribal stability in fostering long-term growth and success.

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Arrowwood Kakinah: Forging a Path to Self Suffency and Cultural Preservation for the Caddo Nation

In a bold move towards economic independence and cultural revitalization, the Caddo Nation has launched Arrowwood Kakinah Enterprise, a tribally owned construction company that intertwines deep-rooted Caddo traditions with modern business acumen. This initiative not only promises to boost the tribe's economic prospects but also serves as a beacon of cultural preservation and community empowerment.

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Building Community Relationships: Caddo Nation Hosts Memorable Fireworks Show

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Caddo Nation's AoA: Nourishing Elders, Empowering Caregivers

The Caddo Nation

Administration on Aging (AoA) Program is more than just a meal service—it's a lifeline for elders and a support system for caregivers. Director Genevieve Moore shared insights into the program's extensive offerings and exciting new developments.

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Mastering Caddo Pottery: An Interview with Chase Kahwinhut Earles

Chase Kahwinhut Earles didn't grow up immersed in Caddo culture. Like many Native youth, his father had moved away from the tribe to pursue education and better opportunities. But through his journey into Caddo pottery, Earles has not only reconnected with his heritage, but helped bring his family back into the cultural fold as well. "This is my connection back," Earles reflects. "Me reconnecting reconnected them as well."

Earles' path to becoming a nationally recognized Caddo pottery artist was not a straight one. After studying animation in college, he worked in web design and programming for years. But something was missing. "I did feel like there was something missing culturally," he explains. "I knew I was Caddo, and I knew I was Native American, and I was interested in that, but I didn't really have any access to the tribe or the culture."

Growing up in Oklahoma City, Earles had no exposure to Caddo art or culture. This absence of cultural identity left a void that he would later fill through his art. "There was not one single mention of the word Caddo in any of the education that I had growing up. Period," Earles recalls.

A vacation to the Southwest reignited Earles' artistic passion, inspiring him to try pottery. But as he began creating Pueblo-inspired pieces, he realized something wasn't right.

"I was like, well, there's something wrong. I'm not going to copy Pueblo pottery, that's cultural appropriation," Earles recounts. This realization led him to research his own tribe's pottery traditions.

What he discovered amazed him. Caddo pottery, with its distinctive brown coloring and intricate designs, rivaled any Native pottery tradition. But it had been largely lost to time, relegated to archeology and museums.

Determined to master this art form, Earles reached out to Jeri Redcorn, who had begun revitalizing Caddo pottery years earlier. Redcorn's guidance was invaluable. "She showed me how she makes her pots, she showed me her process," Earles explains. "But what she gave me that was more important was where to look, where to look for what is Caddo pottery? Where to look for what is Caddo cultural identity?"

With this foundation, Earles embarked on a journey to truly understand the craft from the ground up - literally. He dug his own clay, just as his ancestors had done, and immersed himself in learning about Caddo culture and history. "I reached out through my family, which is through my grandparents' family, into the tribe with Aunt Doris and Miller's and then all people that she knew, and started trying to talk to them," Earles shares. This connection to family and elders became crucial in his journey to understand and master Caddo pottery. Through this process, Earles gained a deep

appreciation for the unique qualities of Caddo pottery. The southeastern clay and mussel shell temper create a distinctive medium. The shapes - from water bottles to effigy vessels - have subtle but recognizable Caddo characteristics. And the designs, while often abstract, carry deep cultural meaning. "The interlocking scrolls...that was told to me by elders, is rolling water symbology, and to the Caddos, that rolling water also means the cycle of life," Earles shares.

As he mastered traditional techniques, Earles began to realize that being a Caddo artist was more than just a career choice - it was his purpose in life. "It was immediately my whole entire purpose in life. So, it all fell there. Some people think, I don't know what my meaning or I don't know what my purpose is, but for me, this is it. That's awesome. That is it. It's obvious, no matter what, this is what I'm going to do."

For Earles, being a Caddo artist isn't about fame or personal gain. Instead, he sees it as a responsibility to contribute to his tribe's cultural heritage. "I didn't set out to be like a famous artist," he explains. "It was kind of like, I want to be an artist, because that's what I was born to be. But since I am Caddo, it is my duty to culturally represent our tribe correctly and to contribute to our cultural identity in this time that we're in."

As he mastered traditional techniques, Earles began pushing the art form in new directions. His effigy pieces, which depict animals or even pop culture figures, help make the pottery more accessible to wider audiences while staying true to Caddo traditions.

"When you look at a pot like this you can say, yeah, that's beautiful. Not sure what it means," he explains. "But if it's a bear or fish or R2-D2 from Star Wars...people relate immediately. And it draws them in. It makes them connect. It makes them want to know more, and then they want to know about the culture." Earles' ultimate goal is to spread awareness of Caddo culture through his art. He focuses on getting pieces into museums where they can educate the most people. And he teaches classes to share his mastery of the tradition with others.

"We've reestablished our pottery tradition. It's done," he states proudly. "It can be there for Caddos that want to learn it and do it." For Earles, pottery has become more than just an art form - it's a way to strengthen cultural identity and pride. He hopes his work will inspire future generations of Caddos to embrace their heritage. "I think it makes them fuller. It makes them more complete," he reflects. "We've now newly reestablished something that we didn't have before. So it's growing."

From disconnection to mastery of a traditional art form, Chase Kahwinhut Earles' journey with Caddo pottery has come full circle. Through his artistry and teaching, he's ensuring this ancient tradition has a bright future ahead, while also fulfilling his personal mission to contribute to and preserve Caddo cultural identity.

Unlike when Chase was growing up you can now see contemporary Caddo artwork in museums and exhibitions almost daily for the last 10 years. Chase Kahwionhut Earles's pottery and sculptures are in 30+ museum and gallery permanent collections all across the country, including the NMAI Smithsonian in D.C, the Autry Museum of the American West in Los Angeles, the entryway of the Capitol of Oklahoma, the Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis, and very soon 3 new commissioned pieces at Crystal Bridges in Arkansas.

Chase has participated in multiple national exhibitions this year show his art and Caddo culture, currently in the Autry Future Imaginaries in Los Angeles, SPEAK at the Sam Noble Museum, Roots and Reverence at the Pearl Fincher Museum, Texas, and The Future of Clay, at the Clay Studio, Philadelphia.

Upcoming demos include Caddo art and history at the Sam Noble museum, with pitfire demo, Sat. Sep. 28, at 1pm and art shows at SEASAM and Cherokee Art Market in October.

www.CaddoPottery.com

www.FaceBook.com/CaddoPottery

www.Instagram.com/Kahwinhut

Caddo Nation Tribal Member Wins Teacher of the Year Award.

The Caddo Nation

proudly celebrates the remarkable achievement of one of its own tribal members, Phillip Roybal II, who was recently named the 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year for Nisqually Middle School in Olympia, Washington. This honor not only recognizes Mr. Roybal's dedication to education but also highlights the importance of Native American representation in the teaching profession.

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Biden-Harris Administration Announces More Than \$12 Million from President Biden's Investing in America Agenda to Clean Up Legacy Pollution on Tribal Lands

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Guardians of the Nation: The Caddo Emergency Management Team

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Caddo Nation Launches SAKU: Powering Native Tribes Through Solar Energy

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Caddo Community Health Representatives: Nurturing Hope, Fostering Health

In the heart of our Caddo Nation, a dedicated team of individuals works tirelessly to ensure the health and well-being of our community members. Led by the indefatigable Sharla Moore, the Community Health Representatives (CHR) Program stands as a testament to the power of compassion, dedication, and community spirit.

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A Message from the Chairman

Tribal self-governance is a cornerstone of sovereignty, allowing Indigenous communities to determine their own futures. It reflects the inherent right of tribes to govern themselves, preserve their cultural heritage, and protect their lands, resources, and people. Through self-governance, tribes can shape policies that reflect their unique needs, values, and traditions, promoting economic development, education, healthcare, and justice on their own terms. This autonomy not only strengthens tribal nations but also reinforces their resilience and self-determination, ensuring that decisions impacting their communities are made by those who know them best.

All federally recognized tribes must be responsible financially when managing federal grants and awards. This responsibility is outlined

in the terms of the grants and awards they receive, as tribes are considered sovereign nations but must still comply with federal regulations when they accept federal funding.

Key requirements for financial responsibility include: Adherence to Uniform Guidance. This regulation outlines how tribes (and other entities) must manage federal funds, ensuring accountability, transparency, and proper use of the funds. This also includes Fiscal Management and Internal Controls, Allowable Costs according to the terms of a grant and federal guidelines. Reporting Requirements: Regular financial and programmatic reporting to the federal government is required to ensure that funds are being used as intended. Audits, Tribes receiving a certain threshold of federal funding must always undergo a Single Audit or program-specific audit to assess their compliance with federal requirements and ensure proper use of funds. As we moved as a nation these keys elements are essential to the success

of the nation. Economic development is crucial for federally recognized tribes for several key reasons.

Self-Sufficiency and Sovereignty

Economic development enhances tribal self-sufficiency and strengthens tribal sovereignty. Tribes that generate their own revenue through business ventures, tourism, natural resources, or other means are less dependent on federal aid, allowing them to exercise greater autonomy over their affairs.

Improved Quality of Life

Economic growth provides resources for improving healthcare, education, housing, and other essential services. Tribes with strong economies can invest in the well-being of their members, addressing issues like poverty, unemployment, and access to basic services.

Job Creation

Economic development creates jobs within the

tribe, reducing unemployment and increasing income for tribal members. This contributes to stronger communities, reduced out-migration, and better standards of living.

Cultural Preservation

Financial independence through economic development helps preserve cultural traditions and values. Tribes can invest in cultural programs, language revitalization, and heritage preservation, ensuring their culture is passed on to future generations.

Control over Natural Resources

Many tribes have access to valuable natural resources (e.g., minerals, timber, energy), which can be developed to generate revenue. By controlling and managing these resources, tribes can make decisions that align with their values,

such as environmental sustainability or sacred land preservation.

Resilience Against Economic Fluctuations

A strong, diversified economy provides tribes with resilience against economic downturns and changes in federal policy. Tribes that develop various revenue streams—such as gaming, tourism, agriculture, and renewable energy—are better positioned to weather financial challenges.

Tribal Governance and Infrastructure

Economic development supports the funding of tribal governments and the infrastructure needed to maintain tribal services. Revenue from tribal enterprises can be reinvested into governmental functions, legal systems, and community infrastructure, strengthening the tribe's

capacity to govern effectively.

Partnerships and Influence

Tribes that are economically successful can build partnerships with private businesses, other governments, and organizations. This increases their influence in regional and national policy discussions and enhances their capacity to advocate for their interests.

In short, economic development is a critical foundation for tribal self-determination, well-being, and long-term sustainability. It allows tribes to thrive as sovereign nations, providing for the needs of their communities while preserving their culture and values. This news addition will reflect and this message from the chairman's office of the Caddo Nation.



Charting a New Course: Caddo Nation's Path to Economic Prosperity and Stability

In a recent interview, Caddo Nation Council Secretary Jennifer Reeder shared insights into the tribe's ongoing efforts to secure a prosperous and stable future for all Caddo citizens. Reeder's vision encompasses both economic development and constitutional reform, emphasizing the importance of tribal stability in fostering long-term growth and success.

A Shift Towards Self-Sufficiency

"We've made significant progress in securing the financial future of our tribe through economic development," Reeder began. She explained that while federal grants have historically played a crucial role in funding essential services for Caddo citizens, these external funding sources often come with limitations that can leave some tribal members without support.

To address this issue, the current tribal council, which took office in 2021, has prioritized a shift towards sustainable, long-term economic development projects. "Our goal was

simple: to create a steady stream of revenue that could be used to support all Caddo citizens without the barriers and limitations imposed by external funding sources," Reeder stated.

Building a Foundation for Success

Reeder emphasized that economic development is a long-term strategy requiring patience and smart investments. Over the past three years, the tribe has launched multiple ventures aimed at generating revenue. One early success has been the Gracemont Travel Plaza project, which has already begun to turn a modest profit.

Other initiatives, such as McKee's Indian Store, George's Department Store, and partnerships with Arrowood Enterprises and Saku Energy, are still in their growth phases. "We understand that building wealth for the tribe is not an overnight process, but we are committed to the long-term vision of financial independence and sustainability," Reeder affirmed.

More Than Just Business

These economic development projects represent more than just business ventures for the Caddo Nation. As Reeder explained, "They are vehicles for self-sufficiency and empowerment. The revenue generated will go directly back into the tribal community, helping our citizens access services and resources, regardless of their income level or where they live."

Moreover, these initiatives are laying the groundwork for a lasting financial legacy. "We are building a future where we rely less on external sources of funding and more on our own entrepreneurial spirit and determination," Reeder stated. "This is not just about economic growth—it's about sovereignty, pride, and the well-being of our entire community."

The Importance of Tribal Stability

Reeder emphasized the critical role that tribal stability plays in the success of these eco-

omic initiatives. "Stabilization of the tribe is what's helping things be successful," she noted. "That is what is helping these efforts grow. We're not having to worry about takeovers. Reeder acknowledged that while challenges remain, progress is evident.

Constitutional Reform: A Key to Long-Term Stability

Looking to the future, Reeder highlighted the importance of the ongoing constitutional reform process. "The work we are doing on the constitution, paired with our efforts and current leadership, that will have everything to do with stabilization of the tribe," she explained. "That process will hopefully make things a lot more stable."

Reeder emphasized the fundamental importance of governmental stability for the tribe's future: "Having a stable tribal government is the key because you can't flourish if you're always in chaos."

itive impact of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds received from the federal government. She praised Chairman Gonzalez and the Council for their responsible stewardship of these resources, noting, "We're not reckless with it. We're using it to do good things and move our tribe forward."

Wilson particularly commended Chairman Gonzalez's vision and proactive approach to seeking additional funding opportunities. "Bobby has brought us a vision. He is looking for monies to help our tribe that we don't have to spend, that the government is helping us with," she explained. This strategy, according to Wilson, has been crucial in propelling the tribe forward without depleting its own resources. The coun-

cilwoman expressed her gratitude for Gonzalez's leadership, stating, "I can't give him enough praise and be so thankful that he has done this for the tribe." She also noted the strong unity between the chairman and the council, appreciating Gonzalez's transparency in financial matters and his inclusive approach to decision-making.

Wilson concluded by reflecting on the timing of Gonzalez's leadership, saying, "It seems to be that the stars and universe have aligned with the Caddo tribe and Bobby, and we're moving forward as we've never done before." This sentiment encapsulates the positive momentum and bright future that Wilson sees for the Caddo Nation under its current leadership.



A Vision for the Future

As these economic projects continue to grow and the new Tribal Constitution takes shape, Reeder expressed confidence in the Caddo Nation's future. "I am confident that the Caddo Nation will be in a stronger position than ever before," she stated. "Together, we are charting a new course for the Caddo Nation, one that ensures prosperity for generations to come."

Through a combination of strategic economic development, stable leadership, and constitutional reform, the Caddo Nation is working to build a future of self-sufficiency, empowerment, and prosperity for all its citizens. As Reeder's insights reveal, this journey is not without its challenges, but the progress made thus far and the vision for the future offer hope for a thriving Caddo Nation in the years to come.

Travis Threlkeld: Bringing Experience, Vision, and Heart to Caddo Nation’s Administration

A new chapter is unfolding for the Caddo Nation’s tribal administration. At the helm of this internal transformation is Travis Threlkeld, a proud Caddo Nation member who stepped into the role of Tribal Administrator in February 2024. With a rich background in public service and a deep commitment to his people, Threlkeld is ushering in an era of positive change, cultural sensitivity, and renewed hope for the tribe’s day-to-day operations.

Threlkeld’s journey to this pivotal role involved a significant personal decision. “I transitioned from council at exactly that time,” he explains, referring to his choice to step down from his position as the Caddo Nation Binger District Representative on the Tribal Council. This move allowed him to fully commit to his new role as Tribal Administrator, where he oversees the departments that keep the tribe functioning every day.

As Tribal Administrator, Threlkeld is a key figure in managing its internal workings and fostering a positive work culture. His role involves overseeing approximately 20 departments and 100 staff members, focusing on the daily grind of departmental operations and employee relations.

“I also left my job with Oklahoma State Parks,” Threlkeld adds, highlighting the significant career shift he made to serve his tribe in this capacity. This transition from external public service to internal tribal administration has given Threlkeld a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing the Caddo Nation.

From State Parks to Tribal Leadership: A Journey of Service

Threlkeld’s journey to tribal administration is rooted in over a decade of experience with Oklahoma State Parks. “I managed in some sort of supervisory capacity for over 11 years with state parks,” Threlkeld reflects. This experience proved invaluable, teaching him to work with diverse groups and adapt to various personalities and situations.

“I really got to learn a lot working with so many different backgrounds, religions, ethnicities, cultures, everything like that,” he shares. “You learn to really adapt to the different characteristics people might bring to you and the different personalities they have.”

This adaptability and people-centric approach have become cornerstones of Threlkeld’s leadership style at Caddo Nation. Overseeing about

20 different programs, including all tribal 638 programs, Threlkeld brings a fresh perspective to tribal administration.

Bridging Gaps and Building Trust

One of Threlkeld’s primary motivations for taking on the role of Tribal Administrator was to address a long-standing issue within the tribe. “There’s always been a disconnect between the upper leadership and day-to-day operations with staff,” he observes. “I’d like to always mix that together.”

“I’m more of a ‘Let’s talk this out. Let’s see if this is the best decision.’ I like listening to everyone’s ideas. I want them to feel heard.”

This inclusive approach marks a significant shift from the traditional top-down management style. Threlkeld emphasizes

“My hope is that eventually the members will start having more trust in us and more compassion, regardless of who is elected in and anywhere.”

the importance of valuing each employee’s perspective and creating an environment where everyone feels their input matters.

Cultivating a Positive Work Culture

Threlkeld’s vision for Caddo Nation extends beyond administrative efficiency. He’s committed to fostering a work environment where employees feel valued and appreciated.

“My job is to place people in jobs that best fit their lifestyle and their strengths,” he explains. This personalized approach has already yielded positive results, with employees expressing newfound appreciation for their roles within the tribe.

“Even just today, a few employees came in just to say thank you for letting us off for Labor Day weekend for four days, and they got to spend more time with their family. They made the comment over and over again that for the first time in a long time, they feel like they’re appreciated here.”

Cultural Sensitivity in Policy Making

As both a tribal member and administrator, Threlkeld brings a unique perspective to policy-making. He’s committed to ensuring that tribal policies reflect Caddo values and cultural practices.

A prime example of this is the revised bereavement leave policy. “For Caddos, we have seven days for a passing of an immediate loved one,” Threlkeld explains. “We wanted to reflect that.” The new policy provides five

workdays of leave, ensuring employees have a full seven days to observe traditional mourning practices.

Additionally, Threlkeld has introduced cultural leave, allowing employees to participate in important cultural events. “We accounted for 24 hours of cultural leave a fiscal year,” he notes. This policy extends beyond Caddo events, recognizing the diversity within the tribal workforce and encouraging cultural exchange.

Building Community Relationships

Threlkeld’s vision extends beyond the tribal offices. He’s actively working to strengthen relationships with surrounding communities and create memorable experiences for tribal members and neighbors alike.

A recent fireworks show at Fort Cobb State Park exemplifies this approach. “I was trying to think of things that would easily bring a community together, something that’s free, something that incorporates a jurisdiction or a district that we haven’t had a lot of stretch in in a while,” Threlkeld shares.

The event brought together multiple agencies and communities, showcasing the power of collaboration. “We all had one objective there: How do we put on a great activity for the community to come out and enjoy?”

Navigating Challenges with

“We don’t want to do what’s been happening before, putting the cart before the horse one after another, and then wondering why it’s failing.”

Compassion

Threlkeld is acutely aware of the challenges faced by tribal employees, particularly those in public-facing roles. He praises the dedication of staff in departments like childcare, housing, community health representatives (CHRs), and social services.

“God bless childcare and housing and CHRs and social services. They really deal one-on-one daily, without a doubt, with all kinds of tribal members, some that are thankful, some that aren’t, some that feel they’re entitled.”

Despite these challenges, Threlkeld notes the unwavering commitment of his staff. “I don’t think they would be here if they didn’t love their job, especially with some of the stuff that they have to go through.”

He urges tribal members to approach these interactions with understanding and respect. “My hope is that eventually the members will start having more trust in us and more compassion, regardless of who is elected in and anywhere.”



A Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, Threlkeld envisions a Caddo Nation that balances traditional values with modern sustainability. In the short term, he aims to create a sustainable work culture that makes Caddo Nation an employer of choice.

“We want our name to go, ‘Yeah, if you go to the Caddo Nation, as long as you’re doing what you can do to help better the tribe, you’re there, you’re locked in, you’re good.’”

Long-term, Threlkeld hopes to see the tribe maintain its 638 programs while becoming less dependent on strict application processes. “We don’t want to do what’s been happening before, putting the cart before the horse one after another, and then wondering why it’s failing over and over again,” he cautions.

Instead, he advocates for a measured, sustainable approach to growth. “As long as we keep our expectations at a decent pace and in a decent area, I think it’s very achievable.”

A Call for Unity and Understanding

As Caddo Nation moves forward under Threlkeld’s leadership, he emphasizes the importance of unity and mutual understanding. He acknowledges the complex nature of being both a tribal member and an employee, noting the need to balance personal connections with professional responsibilities.

Threlkeld credits the current tribal leadership for creating a period of stability and growth, fostering hope among employees and tribal members alike. He sees this as a foundation for future success, urging all stakeholders to work together towards common goals.

“I just couldn’t ask for a better staff to keep this tribe moving forward. It’s been really great.”

As Caddo Nation continues to evolve and grow, Travis Threlkeld stands ready to guide the tribe towards a future that honors its rich cultural heritage while embracing new opportunities for prosperity and self-sustainability. With his blend of experience, vision, and heartfelt commitment to his people, Threlkeld is helping to write a new chapter in the Caddo Nation’s story – one of unity, respect, and shared success.



Caddo Nation Language Department

The Caddo Nation Language Preservation Program’s goal is to halt and reverse the loss of the critically endangered Caddo tribal language over time. The Caddo Nation language program has established an archive and library of publicly and privately available cultural resources. New language learning resources will be developed as Caddo community members contribute their own recordings to the archive.

Call to action: Do you have old Caddo song or language tapes? The Caddo Nation Language Program has free digitization services available for any Caddo descendants who want to preserve their family’s recordings.

Upon digitization, the family can have free unlimited copies of their recordings and will get their original media back.

Please reach out to Alaina Tahlate, director of language preservation, to make arrangements to preserve our language and culture. Email: Atahlate@mycaddonation.com Office: (405) 656-0991

The Caddo Nation’s language program has integrated with other Caddo Nation programs through community outreach events to create more opportunities for Caddo families to share their communal knowledge of our Caddo history, language and culture with one another.



Caddo Nation Princess Kendall Danielle Howell

Caddo Nation Council Members, Caddo Nation Social Services Director, and Indian Child Welfare Officer Attend Child Protection Conference

Caddo Nation Tribal Council members Jennifer Wilson and Kay O'Neil recently participated in the Southern Plains Child Protection Team Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The conference, focused on "building relationships and services that strengthen families through tradition and cul-

ture," provided valuable insights into child welfare and foster care systems.

Wilson, representing the Oklahoma City area district, shared her experiences from the conference, highlighting the event's informative nature and the impactful presentations. "Our keynote speaker today was a former foster

child, so he could speak to that firsthand," Wilson noted. "It was very moving. And now he is an advocate for foster children and legislation, discussing how families and the courts can work together to improve the system."

The council members' attendance at the conference was at the invitation of Kathy Butler, Director of the Caddo Nation Social Services Department, and Harleigh Buster, the Caddo Nation Indian Child Welfare Officer. Wilson and O'Neil were among the few tribal council representatives present at the event, a fact that conference organizers appreciated.

Both Wilson and O'Neil took the opportunity to praise the work of Butler and Buster in child welfare services. O'Neil shared feedback she had received

from tribal members, stating, "I've had people say, 'Oh my goodness. I'm so thankful for Kathy, that she advocated for us and for the child we were talking about.' Kathy really went to bat for them."

Wilson echoed these sentiments, describing Butler and Buster as "amazing" and acknowledging their "incredible work" in protecting and advocating for Caddo children and families.

The councilwomen's participation in this conference demonstrates the Caddo Nation's commitment to staying informed on best practices in child protection and welfare, ensuring that the tribe continues to provide strong support for its youngest members and their families.



Protecting our Pets: A Decade of Community Collaboration

For the past 10 years, the Caddo Nation Community Health Department has been working hand-in-hand with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Fort Sill Veterinary Clinic to provide an invaluable service to our community - free rabies vaccinations for our beloved pets. This program, which began in 2014, has become a shin-

ing example of inter-agency cooperation and community outreach.

Mike Cope from the IHS Office of Environmental Health and Engineering explained the origins of this initiative: "This program actually came about 10 years ago, and we've tried to do it annually with the tribes." The partnership brings together the resources of the IHS, the veterinary expertise of Fort Sill, and the community connections of the Caddo Nation to ensure that pets across our region are protected against rabies.

What makes this program truly special is its broad reach. While centered at the Caddo Nation, the vaccination clinics serve multiple tribes in the Southwest Oklaho-

ma region. "We have the Comanches, the Kiowas, Delawares, the Caddo Nation, Apache, and Wichita," Cope noted. "We have done rabies vaccination clinics for all those tribes as of yet. The only one that we haven't done yet is the Kiowas."

The mechanics of the program are straightforward but impactful. The tribes cover the cost of vaccines and syringes, while Fort Sill provides veterinarians who administer the shots free of charge. This cost-sharing model allows the program to reach as many pets as possible while keeping expenses manageable for the participating tribes.

Frequency of the clinics can vary based on available resources. "Sometimes we can do it twice,

two times a year. Sometimes, depending on the manpower of Fort Sill, we can only do it maybe once a year for every tribe," Cope explained. This flexibility ensures that even with changing circumstances, the program continues to serve our communities year after year.

The impact of this program extends far beyond the individual pets receiving vaccinations. By preventing the spread of rabies, we're protecting not just our animal companions, but also our children, elders, and entire communities from a deadly disease. It's a proactive approach to public health that demonstrates the power of collaboration between tribal nations, federal agencies, and military installations.

As evidenced by the images from our recent clinic, the program brings together a diverse group of participants. From tribal elders to military personnel, from community



health workers to pet owners, everyone plays a role in making these vaccination clinics a success. The sight of wagging tails and purring cats alongside uniformed service members and tribal health workers is a heartwarming reminder of what we can achieve when we work together.

Looking ahead, the Caddo Nation Community Health Department hopes to continue and possibly expand this vital program. As we celebrate a decade of keeping our pets healthy and our communities safe,

we invite all tribal members to participate in future clinics. By vaccinating our pets, we're not just protecting them - we're strengthening the bonds of our community and honoring our commitment to the health and wellbeing of all living creatures in our care.

Stay tuned for announcements about upcoming vaccination clinics, and remember - a healthy pet makes for a happy home and a stronger community.





Congratulations to State Championship Runner Kendall Howell (Caddo) to receive a state ring.

Kendall Howell, Caddo Nation Member, is the daughter of Kandace Keahbone and the granddaughter of Kelly Howell-Factor. On May 11th, 2024 Mustang High School girls won OSSAA 6A Track and Field State Championship! Kendall took the podium placing 6th in the 800m with a personal record of 2:17:18.

Building Community Relationships: Caddo Nation Hosts Memorable Fireworks Show

Travis Threlkeld's vision extends beyond the tribal offices. He's actively working to strengthen relationships with surrounding communities and create memorable experiences for tribal members and neighbors alike. A recent fireworks show at Fort Cobb State Park, hosted by the Caddo Nation, exemplifies this approach and demonstrates the power of collaboration and community outreach.

"I was trying to think of things that would easily bring a community together, something that's free, something that incorporates a jurisdiction or a district that we haven't had a lot of stretch in in a while," Threlkeld shares. The idea for the fireworks show came to him about three months ago, and he immediately saw its potential to make a positive impact.



Choosing the Perfect Location

Fort Cobb State Park was selected as the ideal venue for several reasons. Threlkeld explains, "It's safe. You have Rangers. We know we have our security guards, but I said, it's a lake original jurisdiction of the tribe. It's our homelands. We have a lot of ties to that lake." v

The location also held significance for the local community. "When you look at the data of those type of communities out there, sadly, there's a lot of people that can't afford to go to places to experience something like that, take their kids, everything like that," Threlkeld notes. By hosting the event at Fort Cobb, the Caddo Nation could provide a free, accessible experience for families who might otherwise miss out on such celebrations.

A Collaborative Effort

The fireworks show quickly became a collaborative effort, bringing together multiple agencies and community groups. Threlkeld reached

out to the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Fort Cobb State Park, finding enthusiastic partners who shared the same vision.

"We created a quick partnership there because we both wanted it for the same intent. We didn't want to make money off of it. We wanted it solely to bring the community together," Threlkeld recalls.

The list of participating organizations grew rapidly:

- Twin Cities Fire Department
- Fort Cobb Fire Department
- Fort Cobb State Park Rangers
- Caddo Nation Emergency Management
- Caddo Nation Security

"We had a meeting about it, and everyone was so excited to finally see a tribe stepping forward to coordinate things and create a place for memories in one location," Threlkeld says. The focus wasn't on what each group could



gain, but on how they could collectively create a great experience for the community.

Special Arrangements for Caddo Elders

In a touching display of respect and appreciation, the Rangers at Fort Cobb State Park took the initiative to create a special area for Caddo elders. "The Rangers really pushed hard and heavy to create a space for just our Caddo elders," Threlkeld shares with pride. "Since we were sponsoring it, they wanted to show appreciation, and they created a space for just our Caddo people out there, if needed, and parking and everything."

This gesture deeply moved Threlkeld, reinforcing his belief in the power of community partnerships. "That said a lot to me that there's still people out there that don't take things for granted. They actually appreciate things, and that's hard to

come by nowadays."

Impact and Future Plans

The fireworks show was a resounding success, drawing families from across the region and creating lasting memories. "Talking to all the people after the show, everyone was just thankful. They were begging for us to do it again," Threlkeld recalls. Many attendees expressed appreciation for having a safe, local event that didn't require extensive travel or expense.

The positive response has inspired Threlkeld to think even bigger for future events. "My goal going forward is to build off this. If we can try to do it yearly, let's get other tribes involved," he enthuses. He sees potential for collaboration with neighboring tribes like the Wichitas and Delawares, who also have historical ties to the area.

"Let's use this as an opportunity of all the good that came out of it. And let's let other people try to hop on and enjoy and be a

part of providing goodness to the communities," Threlkeld says, his excitement palpable.

For Threlkeld, events like these represent more than just entertainment – they're about building bridges, fostering understanding, and creating shared experiences that strengthen the fabric of the community. "There's no amount of money you can put on it to see a smile on a kid's face or a small family that you know is going through a hardship, but they got to put all that out of their mind for just 10 to 15 minutes, and actually just enjoy the time, enjoy the outside," he reflects.

As the Caddo Nation continues to grow and evolve, initiatives like the fireworks show serve as examples of the tribe's commitment to community engagement and relationship-building. By bringing people together and creating positive shared experiences, the Caddo Nation is not only honoring its past but also paving the way for a bright and interconnected future.



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CADDO NATION

ENROLLMENT CARD FEES

VEHICLE YEAR	YEAR FEE
• 2021 - 2024	\$89.40
• 2017 - 2020	\$77.40
• 2013 - 2016	\$59.40
• 2009 - 2012	\$41.40
• 2008 & Older	\$23.40
• FARM	\$35.00
• VETERAN	\$20.00

APRIL 1, 2023 // ENROLLMENT CARD FEES:

• Tribal Elders All Cards.....	FREE
• Paper 8 x 10 CDIB	FREE
• Enrollment Certificare Card No Photo	15.00
• CDIB with Photo (white card)	20.00
• Western Hemispher Tribal ID	30.00

* Newly purchased vehicles will be subject to an excise tax of 2% of the sale price of the vehicle according to the Caddo Nation Tax Ordinance.
* Minimum fee of \$20.00 will be charged for vehicles with a sale price of \$1,500 or less.

For more information, please contact the TAG OFFICE at (405) 656-2209 or email tag@mycaddonation.com

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Caddo Nation Childcare Cultural Program: Revitalizing Tradition for Future Generations

The Caddo Nation Childcare Cultural Program is at the forefront of preserving and revitalizing the rich traditions of the Caddo people. As cultural practices face the risk of fading away, this program stands firm in its commitment to keeping Caddo heritage alive. Led by dedicated individuals like Leonard Kionute and River Whittle, the program goes beyond conventional childcare. It serves as a vital conduit for nurturing the very essence of Caddo identity, ensuring its continuation for future generations.

Preserving Voices of Wisdom

One of the program's most significant initiatives is the recording and preservation of elder wisdom. "We're just starting to scratch the surface," Kionute explains. The team is conducting interviews with Caddo elders, capturing their stories, knowledge, and memories on video. These recordings are not just historical archives; they're living documents of Caddo culture.

"We want the youth to really know what it was like when I grew up," Kionute emphasizes. "It's just not the same anymore." By creating these video recordings, the program ensures that the voices of elders won't be lost, even as times change. These recordings cover a wide range of topics, from traditional dances and regalia to stories of community life and cultural values.

Reviving Community Spirit

A central theme in the program's efforts is the revival of the strong community spirit that defined Caddo gatherings. Kionute recalls a time when events



were truly communal affairs: "When I grew up around here, it was all community effort. You had a dinner up here, the whole community was here."

This sense of community extended to every aspect of Caddo life. Before dances or dinners, people would gather to prepare together. "The night before, they'd come in and have meat," Kionute remembers. "That's how the younger girls, young ladies learned." These gatherings were more than just preparation—they were opportunities for storytelling, teaching, and bonding.

The program aims to reinstitute these practices through cultural events and educational programs. By bringing people together to learn traditional skills like outdoor cooking or meat preparation for dances, they hope to rekindle the community spirit that was once the heartbeat of Caddo life.

Celebrating Seasonal Rhythms

The Childcare Cultural Program is also working to align their activities with the natural rhythms that have long guided Caddo life. They're planning events tied to seasons and traditional practices, such as fishing events and gardening activities.

Kionute shares a memory from his father about a summer gathering centered around the harvest: "When all the crops were pretty much producing, he said we'd have a meeting and dinner, and we'd eat nothing but the vegetables from the gardens." By reviving such practices, the program hopes to reconnect the community with the land and the seasonal cycles that have always been integral to Caddo culture.

Looking to the Future

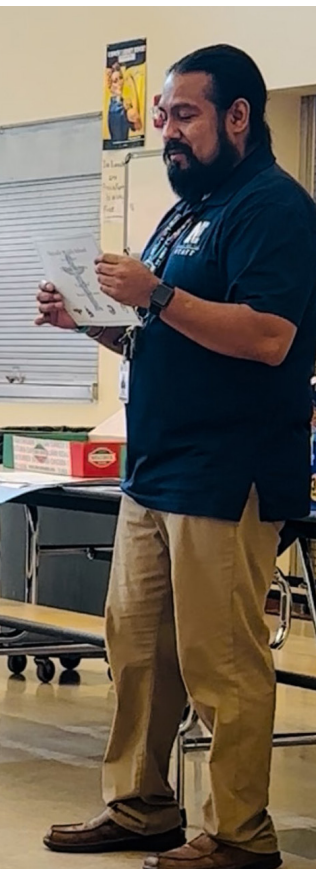
As the program moves forward, there are plans to expand its reach and impact. Ideas include organizing more traditional dances, possibly extending them to multi-day events as they once were, complete with camping and communal cooking. The team is also exploring ways to make their programs more accessible to community members in different locations.

"We're not trying to just sit there and say, 'Well, we know it all,'" Kionute emphasizes. Instead, the program seeks to gather information from elders and share it in a way that will create a bridge between generations and ensure that Caddo cultural knowledge continues to thrive.

The Caddo Nation Childcare Cultural Program is more than just an educational initiative—it's a vital link between past and future, working to ensure that the rich tapestry of Caddo culture remains vibrant and alive for generations to come. Through their dedicated efforts, they are not just preserving traditions; they are breathing new life into the very heart of Caddo identity.



Caddo Nation Tribal Member Wins Teacher of the Year Award



"From Anadarko to Olympia: A Native Educator's Journey"

Roots in Anadarko: The Foundation of a Future Educator

Phillip Roybal II, a graduate of Anadarko High School's class of 2000, attributes much of his passion for education to his formative years in the Anadarko community. He fondly remembers influential educators who shaped his journey, including Mrs. Campbell, his kindergarten teacher at Sunset Elementary; Mr. Bailey, his 6th-grade reading teacher at

Mission Elementary; and Mr. Sneed and Mr. Callahan from AWARE - Anadarko High School. These mentors played a crucial role in inspiring Roybal's own educational path.

A Rich Heritage: Caddo, Kiowa, and Comanche Lineage

Deeply rooted in his Native American heritage, Phillip is an enrolled member of the Caddo Nation and a descendant of the Kiowa and Comanche Nations. He is the son of Lenora Parton from Gracemont and the late Phillip Roybal from Denver, Colorado. His grandparents

include Frankie Ware from Anadarko, the late Thurman Parton from Gracemont, and the late John and Marcus Roybal from Denver, Colorado.

From Military Service to the Classroom

Before embarking on his teaching career, Roybal served in the military from 1999 to 2016, holding various positions including Religious Affairs Specialist, Motor Transport Operator, and Special Forces Operations Sergeant. Following his military service, he pursued higher education,

earning multiple degrees including a Master of Education in Special Education.

Transforming Education: The HI-SEL Classroom

For the past two years, Roybal has been working as a Special Education Teacher at Nisqually Middle School, where he has made significant contributions. He successfully advocated for changing the name of his classroom from "Emotional Behavior Disorder" (EBD) to "High Intense Social Emotional Learning" (HI-SEL), promoting a more inclusive.



Caddo Nation’s AoA: Nourishing Elders, Empowering Caregivers

While the AoA is known for its daily congregate meals, Moore emphasizes that their services extend far beyond the dining room with respite care for grandparents raising grandchildren and caregiver support for those tending to elder family members. The AOA provides assistance with BIA paperwork for grandparents seeking custody, home safety modifications and medical equipment through the Pathways Program with raining videos on elder care techniques

“We have a respite program where we pay \$10 an hour for up to 40 hours per quarter for caregivers to have a break,” Moore explains.

Pathways to Better Care

The AoA is thrilled about the new Pathways Program, funded through Oklahoma State. This initiative will allow them to provide even more comprehensive services, providing hospital beds with pressure mattresses, body alarms, and earing aids, oxygen concentrators, an some cleaning and safety modifications.

Moore’s pride in the program is evident, “I’ve worked on Pathways since last April to get it going. It took forever, but it’s going to support all of our health services programs.”

Quality Nutrition, Not Convenience

The AoA takes pride in serving fresh, healthy meals to Caddo elders with real meats instead of pre-packaged, processed options. Homemade chicken fried steak for dine-in guests. We cater to elder preferences and nutritional needs

“We use real meats. We don’t just buy the packaged meats that you can just heat up,” Moore states.

Cultural Connection

Language events featuring traditional foods like skillet bread with opportunities for elders to share their knowledge and skills.

Empowering Elders Through Employment

The AOA partnered with AARP to offer employment opportunities for those 55 and older: “It’s training. They can do it for up to four years,” Moore explains. “Minimum wage, 20 hours per week and skills training for future employment.

Opportunities in various tribal departments.”

Community Outreach

The AoA extends its reach beyond the tribal complex with congregate meals in Gracemont for local residents, a “blessing box” for community members in need, and plans for improved signage to help visitors navigate tribal services

The Caddo Nation AoA Program is a vital resource, blending traditional values with modern care solutions. From nutritious meals to innovative support services, the AoA is ensuring that Caddo elders age with dignity, respect, and a strong connection to their cultural heritage.



The way we take care of our relatives who have walked on is one of the special things we have as Caddo People.

Please thank Mr. Bobby Butler if you see him for the care he’s been taking of the Caddo cemetery. He mows and weed eats in the hot sun at 84 years young.

Bobby Butler, Howwih!

GOOD AFTERNOON, CADDO NATION STAFF MEMBERS, WE HOPE ALL IS WELL IN YOUR WORKPLACE AND IN YOUR FAMILIES. CADDO NATION EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT WOULD LIKE TO SHARE SOME INFORMATION WITH EVERYONE.

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Arrowood Kakinah: Forging a Path to Self Suffency and Cultural Preservation for the Caddo Nation

The Power of a Name

The name “Arrowood Kakinah” is far more than a corporate title; it is a testament to the rich history and enduring spirit of the Caddo people. “Arrowwood,” or “Bob Yoko” in the Caddo language, harkens back to a time when the Caddo were renowned as master bow makers, controlling the trade of Bois D’arc wood along the Red River.

Chairman Bobby Gonzalez elaborates on the historical significance: “The Caddos are bow makers, and part of our history is that we controlled the Bois D’arc by trade. At the time, it only grew in one place, which was the Red River, until the Spanish introduced horses. Then the horses consumed these horse apples that grow on the trees and as horses traveled, they began to spread this sacred tree all over.”

This control over the Bois D’arc trade was a cornerstone of Caddo economic power in pre-colonial times. The wood’s strength and flexibility made it ideal for crafting bows, and the Caddo’s expertise in this craft was widely recognized and considered expert shooters with bows. “Kakinah,” meaning “to build something strong” in the Caddo language, completes the company’s name. This dual meaning encapsulates the enterprise’s mission: to construct robust physical structures while simultaneously building a strong economic foundation for the tribe’s future.

A Company Born of Necessity

Arrowood Kakinah Enterprise was not created on a whim, but out of a pressing need within the community. Arrowood was constructed out of need to help save Constuction cost dollars and turn as much as the financial rescors over internally within the tribe to save cost and to help spread construction dollars. This pragmatic approach to addressing community needs while hon-

oring cultural heritage is at the heart of Arrowood Kakinah’s mission. The company’s first major undertaking exemplifies this dual purpose: the construction of a \$10.5 million childcare and community center funded by a host of federal and state agencies through a competitive process.

Cultural Integration in Modern Design

The childcare and community center project is more than just a construction job; it is a canvas for cultural expression. Designed in collaboration with Mass Design Group, named Architect of the Year for 2023, the facility incorporates Caddo cultural elements throughout its architecture and landscaping.

“The landscape is important,” Chairman Gonzalez notes, “because the Caddo have always lived on the banks of water, and we need water to live so the idea was to get back to the basics of what it takes to survive. We must have water, heat and wood.” The building’s design considers traditional Caddo perspectives on the natural world, incorporating elements that align with the winter solstice and the four cardinal directions. It will feature an aquatic pool, a safe room, and a gymnasium, serving as a hub for community activities and cultural education. This approach to design reflects a deeper philosophy about the role of culture in community development. As Chairman Gonzalez puts it, “There’s one thing that taught us during the pandemic: you cannot eat a machine at a gaming facility.” By creating a space that honors Caddo traditions and meets contemporary community needs, Arrowood Kakinah is helping to ensure that cultural knowledge is passed on to future generations.

Economic Empowerment Through Internal Investment

The creation of Arrowood Kakinah represents a strategic move to keep construction dollars

within the tribe. Rather than contracting out to external companies and watching those funds leave the community, the tribe can now recycle these investments internally. This approach not only builds the tribe’s economic capacity but also creates jobs and training opportunities for tribal members.

The impact of this strategy became quickly apparent. In its first year of operation, Arrowood Kakinah achieved a remarkable feat: securing a \$3.4 million road project and getting the project bonded for a federal highway project just four months after its inception. “Usually, when a business starts, they lose money in the first year by just investing. Arrowood had a \$3.4 million bond on a federal highway project four months after it existed.” unheard of within the corporate world, let alone a small tribe in southwestern Oklahoma. This project and the renovation of Cummins Road showcase the company’s ability to work with multiple stakeholders, including county commissioners, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and neighboring tribes like the Wichita. The road project, split 50-50 with the Wichita tribe, demonstrates the potential for inter-tribal cooperation in infrastructure development.

Building Capacity, Creating Opportunity

Arrowood Kakinah’s rapid success is not just about winning contracts; it is about building capacity within the tribe. The company has partnered with Connect Advisors to help manage projects and train Caddo members in various aspects of the construction industry.

“We’re training our own people,” Chairman Gonzalez explains. “That management group is helping train our own individual Caddo members that are on the project how to manage and construct and build these kinds of projects out.” This includes everything from managing subcontractors to handling permits and construction costs.

The company has already created several key positions filled by tribal members and experienced professionals. Brock Eubanks, with a master’s degree in construction management, serves as the construction manager. Robert Palmer, a Caddo with over 40 years of experience in dirt work, is the plant superintendent. The team also includes Greg Trent, a concrete specialist, and Zach Keelan, a federal lawyer who serves as vice president of the Caddo Nation Economic Development Authority.

The Road to 8(a) Certification

Looking to the future, Arrowood Kakinah is pursuing 8(a) certification through the Small Business Administration. This certification would open significant opportunities for growth and economic development by allowing the company to compete for federal contracts.

Chairman Gonzalez outlines the potential impact: “Once that happens, we’ll be able to contract directly with the federal government and on projects that they are building. Maybe they’re building new barracks, new houses, or just government buildings. If Indian Health Services is letting out a bid to construct a new health services facility on Indian land or a reservation, because we’d be 8(a) certified, we would be provided notice.”

This certification could be a game-changer for the tribe, potentially guaranteeing a minimum 20% share of certain government projects due to Arrowood Kakinah’s status as a minority-owned, tribally owned business.

Revitalizing Infrastructure: The Transportation Department’s Comeback

The establishment of Arrowood Kakinah coincides with another significant development: the revival of the Caddo Nation’s Transportation Department after a 20-year hiatus. Through a 638 contract with the BIA, the tribe has secured \$9.8 million in transportation funding for bridges and roads within the tribal jurisdiction. This resurrection began with a modest but crucial step. “We went after transportation dollars through the BIA, we got 2% planning dollars,” Chairman Gonzalez recounts. “It’s all federal, and we planned out a prior-



ity list of roads and bridges that we wanted to construct as a tribal government.” From this initial \$421,000 in planning funds, the tribe has leveraged its resources to secure nearly \$10 million for infrastructure projects. This funding has enabled the prioritization and construction of crucial infrastructure projects, including road improvements around tribal headquarters and in areas where tribal members reside.

The impact of these improvements extends beyond mere convenience. Many of the roads being improved are school bus routes, directly affecting the safety of Caddo children. The tribe is also addressing long-standing issues, such as drainage problems in residential areas like Halfmoon Circle.

A Call to Action for Indian Country

As Arrowood Kakinah Enterprise continues to grow and establish itself in the construction industry, the Caddo Nation extends an invitation to all of Indian Country—Native tribes, corporations, and individuals—to partner with them on future projects. This call to action is not just about business; it’s about strengthening inter-tribal connections and supporting Native-owned enterprises.

Chairman Gonzalez emphasizes the importance of collaboration within Indian Country: “We encourage our fellow tribes, Native-owned businesses, and individuals to consider Arrowood Kakinah for their construction needs. By working together, we can keep our resources within our communities and build a stronger, more resilient Indian Country.”

The company’s expertise in road construction and infrastructure development makes it an ideal partner for tribes looking to improve their transportation networks. With its recent success in securing and executing federal highway projects, Arrowood Kakinah is well-positioned to assist other tribes in navigating the complexities of such undertakings.

“Whether it’s building community centers, improving roads, or tackling large-scale infrastructure projects, Arrowood Kakinah is ready to bring our expertise and cultural understanding to communities across Indian Country,” says Brock Eubanks, the company’s construction manager. “We’re not just building structures; we’re building relationships and strengthening the economic fabric of Native communities.”

Tribes and Native organizations interested in partnering with Arrowood Kakinah are encouraged to reach out to the Caddo Nation Economic Development Authority for more information on potential collaborations and project opportunities.

A Vision for the Future

As Arrowood Kakinah continues to grow, it symbolizes more than just a business venture. It represents the Caddo Nation’s commitment to self-determination, cultural preservation, and economic prosperity. By blending traditional values with modern business practices, the Caddo are building a strong foundation for future generations.

Chairman Gonzalez sums up the holistic impact of these initiatives: “We’re able to train our people, we’re able to put our people to work. We’re able to construct it ourselves, providing economic dollars to the community, bringing community wealth back into this community, as well as building compacity ourselves and paying our people. It’s just a win-win all the way around.”

From the culturally infused design of the new childcare center to the improved roads connecting Caddo communities, every project undertaken by Arrowood Kakinah is a step towards a more self-sufficient and culturally vibrant Caddo Nation. As the company grows and takes on more projects, it promises to be a driving force in the tribe’s economic development, all while staying true to the meaning of its name – Arrowood Kakinah – building something strong for the Caddo people.

“Arrowood management group is helping train our own individual Caddo members that are on the project how to manage and construct and build these kinds of projects out.”



Paving the Way Forward: Caddo Nation’s Transportation Department Builds Roads and Opportunities

The Caddo Nation’s Transportation Department, revived after a 20-year hiatus, is making significant strides in improving infrastructure and safety for tribal members and the broader community. From major road projects to innovative safety initiatives, the department is laying the groundwork for a more connected and secure future.



The Resurrection of a Vital Program

Chairman Bobby Gonzales recounts the department’s revival: “Thirty years ago, the Caddo Nation had a transportation department, and they prioritized all these bridges and roads with the BIA, through the red highway program. But for over 20 years, the Caddo Nation did not have a transportation department.”

The turning point came when Gonzales met with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and their federal highway department representatives at the regional office in Anadarko. “The bureau helped us understand that we could go after our transportation dollars, and that we could ‘638’ those contracts out,” Gonzales explains, referring to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act that allows tribes to assume responsibility for programs previously managed by the federal government.

This initiative began with securing 2% planning dollars, amounting to \$421,000,

to hire staff and set up a transportation program. From this modest start, the tribe has leveraged its resources impressively. “Over time, we were able to not only capture the 2%, but we were also able to capture \$9.8 million overall,” Gonzales proudly states. “That allowed us to hire people and to start constructing roads and start working with the county.”

The Cummins Road Project: A Testament to Collaboration

One of the department’s most significant achievements is the Cummins Road project, a \$3.4 million endeavor that highlights the power of inter-tribal cooperation and effective government-to-government relations.

Cummins Road, while a county road, falls within tribal jurisdiction. The Caddo Nation, recognizing its importance, especially given the planned construction of a Child Care Community Center nearby, prioritized its renovation. “We were able to work with the county commissioners and make that a pri-

ority,” Gonzales explains. The project became even more impactful when the Wichita Affiliated Tribes approached the Caddo Nation about cost-sharing.

“We share the road together,” Gonzales notes. “The idea was to cost-share the road. So the Caddo Nation, through federal highways, was able to capture 50% of the money that went toward the road, and the Wichita captured 50% of the money.”

This collaborative approach not only made the project financially feasible but also strengthened inter-tribal relations. The road improvement will benefit both tribes, supporting the Caddo Nation’s new childcare center and the Wichita tribe’s planned hotel and housing developments.

Arrowwood Kakinah: Building Tribal Capacity

In a strategic move that intertwines economic development with infrastructure improvement, the Caddo Nation’s Economic Development

Authority, through its construction company Arrowwood Kakinah, successfully bid on the Cummins Road project.

“Arrowwood was able to bid on that project, like any other contractor,” Gonzales explains. “We were able to secure the award after the second round of bids.” This success is particularly significant as it marks Arrowwood’s first major road project, demonstrating the company’s growing capabilities and potential for future contracts. The completion of this project has opened new doors for Arrowwood.

“Now that the project’s complete, we secured 3.4 million. And you know, we can hope now that we secured because we were able to pull this off, and it took a good year to construct road and get all this done. Now we have a line of credit for Arrowwood up to 3.4 million, and our first project was a success.”

Looking to the Future: Expanding Services and Safety Initiatives

Khye Weathers, the Transportation Program Director, envisions a bright future for the department. “I am excited about what the future will bring,” Weathers explains. “Tribal transportation planning will aid our Tribal leaders

to make informed transportation decisions that will enrich Tribal lands and provide opportunities for current and future generations.”

The department is exploring various projects to enhance road safety and community infrastructure. Weathers mentions potential projects such as redoing school parking lots, particularly in areas with high Native American student populations. “Partnering with schools will provide safe roadways for all, as well as protect students and faculty,” she says.

Other planned initiatives include:

- Road Striping and Signage: Improving visibility and navigation on tribal roads.
- Mowing and Maintenance: Regular upkeep of roadsides, ditches, and culverts.
- Pothole Filling and Crack Sealing: Proactive maintenance to extend road life.
- Wayfinding Improvements: Exploring options for cohesive, culturally appropriate signage across tribal lands.

Innovative Safety Programs

The Transportation Department is also working on grant-funded safety initiatives. Weathers shares exciting plans:

“We’re working on purchasing a driving simulator with the overall goal of improving critical driving skills, enhancing decision making abilities, and increasing overall safety.”

The department aims to acquire educational tools such as drunk driving simulation goggles and even explore virtual reality applications for driver education.

“Simulation-based training allows you to expose your drivers to various challenging environments. You can record operator reactions and response times and provide after-action reviews that point out performance improvement areas for driver,” Weathers explains.

These initiatives reflect a commitment not just to road construction, but to comprehensive transportation safety that engages and educates the community.

A Road to Self-Sufficiency

The revival and expansion of the Caddo Nation’s Transportation Department represents more than just improved roads. It’s a path toward greater self-sufficiency, job creation, and community development. By leveraging federal funds, fostering inter-tribal cooperation, and building internal capacity through entities like Arrowwood Kakinah, the Caddo Nation is paving the way for a brighter, more connected future.

As the department continues to grow and take on new projects, it stands as a testament to the Caddo Nation’s commitment to progress, safety, and the well-being of its people. From major road renovations to innovative safety programs, the Transportation Department is truly driving the Caddo Nation forward.



WHAT is the Caddo Constitution Project?



The Caddo Nation is in the first phase of a comprehensive process for reviewing, analyzing, gathering input, and, ultimately, proposing essential updates to the Caddo Constitution.

This first phase process includes research

and analysis of the existing Caddo constitution and comparative analysis of other Oklahoma Tribal Nation constitutions. A comparative analysis of other Oklahoma Tribal Nation’s processes for revising their constitution(s), along with gathering of data and documents pertinent to the project

WHY undertake this project?

The Caddo Nation constitution, initially

ratified in 1938, began as a generic constitution model created by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The model was for Tribes to adopt and modify as needed when creating their own constitutions. However, many Tribal Nations adopted the language of the model without changing it to reflect their unique cultures, histories, or governments.

The action former Caddo leaders took to establish the Caddo Nation Constitution and By-Laws at that time is greatly respected. It is even more remarkable, considering it had been only 80 years since the Caddo people

had arrived in Indian Territory after decades of turmoil and removal from homelands. As the Caddo Nation has evolved and its citizenship has grown to 8,000 strong, it is time that the Constitution be assessed to ensure it reflects who we are and the needs of our Nation in the 21st Century and those of future Caddo generations.

WHO is leading this project?

The Caddo Nation Tribal Council is the leader of this project with support from the Caddo Nation legal counsel & content

experts, the Caddo Nation administration and staff, the Project Coordinator, Council-appointed Ad Hoc Committee, and additional support will be identified in future phases.

WHEN will the project happen?

The project is currently in Phase I – Research and Analysis. This phase is tentatively projected to end by November 2024. The

results of this phase will determine the best process for Phase II, which will focus on engaging citizens, collecting feedback data (survey), and identifying key revision areas.

HOW do we stay updated?

The Caddo Nation will share regular updates through all official Tribal channels: the Caddo Nation website, the Caddo Nation newspaper, and social media pages such as Facebook and Instagram. www.mycaddonation.com

Biden-Harris Administration Announces More Than \$12 Million from President Biden’s Investing in America Agenda to Clean Up Legacy Pollution on Tribal Lands

Date: August 30, 2024
Contacts: Interior_Press@ios.doi.gov

WASHINGTON — The Department of the Interior today announced a more than \$12 million investment through President Biden’s Investing in America agenda to help four Tribal Nations clean up orphaned oil and gas wells on their homelands. This investment is a critical step in supporting Tribal land rights and economic opportunities to address legacy pollution, reduce harmful methane leaks, and tackle environmental hazards that threaten Tribal communities. Funding may be utilized to plug, remediate or reclaim orphaned wells on Tribal lands, restore soil and habitat in degraded areas, decommission or remove associated infrastructure, identify and characterize additional undocumented wells on Tribal land, and set up well-plugging capacity where not already established.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a total of \$4.7 billion to address orphaned

wells across the country, including \$150 million specifically for Tribal communities. The Department previously awarded \$40 million in grants to ten Tribes in the first phase of Tribal orphaned well funding. Today’s announcement brings the total nationwide investment in cleaning up orphaned wells on Tribal lands to nearly \$52 million. Additional phase two Tribal grants will be announced on a rolling basis.

“The Biden-Harris administration is committed to honoring Tribal sovereignty by ensuring that Tribes are able to make their own decisions about how to address the health and safety needs of their people, improve economic growth, and realize their vision for the future,” said Secretary Deb Haaland. “Through the President’s Investing in America agenda, we are making millions of dollars available for Tribally led projects that are addressing legacy pollution and creating good-paying jobs.”

Orphaned oil and gas wells have the potential to jeopardize public health and safety by contaminating groundwater, seeping

toxic chemicals, polluting drinking water sources, emitting dangerous pollutants, and harming wildlife. Methane leaking from many of these unplugged wells is a severe safety hazard and is a significant cause of climate change, being more than 25 times as potent as carbon dioxide at trapping heat in the atmosphere.

The Interior Department made \$55 million available in the second phase of Tribal awards and continues to work with Tribes to complete proposals and initiate projects under this opportunity. Tribes also may request direct assistance from the Department, through “In Lieu of Grant” funding, to administer and carry out plugging, remediation and reclamation activities on the Tribe’s behalf.

In addition to providing historic funding to Tribes, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law allocated over \$4.2 billion to identify and address orphaned well sites on state and private lands, and \$250 million to identify and address well sites in national parks, national forests, national

wildlife refuges, and other public lands. Over the past three years, more than \$1 billion has been awarded to states and nearly \$150 million has been awarded to federal agencies.

Grants through today’s announcement will be provided in two categories: implementation and program development. Implementation Grants support plugging, remediation and reclamation activities for orphaned wells on Tribal lands. Other funded activities under this type of grant include pre-plugging assessments and remediation of soil and restoration of habitat degraded by orphaned wells or associated pipelines, facilities, and infrastructure. Program Development Grants support capacity-building activities that help Tribal recipients prepare for future plugging, remediation and reclamation activities. Program Development funding will assist Tribes in locating, inventorying and assessing orphaned wells and in amplifying Tribal capacity and expertise through job creation, training and administrative support.

This effort also advances the President’s Justice40 Initiative that sets a goal to deliver 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain federal investments to disadvantaged communities that have been marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

Tribal Phase 2 Projects

Caddo Nation of Oklahoma - \$3,707,129
Program Development and Implementation Grants

These projects will verify and assess up to 20 orphaned wells identified in a preliminary inventory during the Program Development phase, identify undocumented wells, and then will use Implementation Grant funds to plug orphaned wells and remediate and restore well sites.

Navajo Nation - \$4,970,911
Implementation Grant

Building on assessment activities completed under a Phase 1 award, this project will identify and assess undocumented orphaned wells on Trib-

al land, plug an additional 19 prioritized wells, and remediate wells sites. The project will also conduct post-plugging inspections and measurements to verify the lack of gaseous emissions or water contamination from plugged wells and the achievement of vegetation performance standards appropriate to the site’s future land uses.

Osage Nation - \$1,000,000
Program Development Grant

This project will build on inventory, assessment, and plugging activities conducted with a Phase 1 award by developing remediation plans that document environmental degradation, map boundaries of contaminated areas, and prioritize well sites that pose the greatest environmental risks on Tribal land for future remediation.

Seneca Nation of Indians - \$2,500,000
Implementation Grant

This project will fund plugging of up to 25 orphaned wells in the Tribe’s Allegany Territory.



Caddo Nation Awarded \$3.7 Million in Federal Funding to Address Legacy Pollution

The U.S. Department of the Interior has announced over \$12 million in funding to help four Tribal Nations clean up orphaned oil and gas wells on their lands. This investment, part of President Biden’s Investing in America agenda, aims to address legacy pollution, reduce methane leaks, and tackle environmental hazards threatening Tribal communities.

Key points:

- The Caddo Nation of Oklahoma received \$3,707,129 for both Program Development and Implementation Grants.
- Funding will be used to verify and assess up to 20 orphaned wells, identify undocumented wells, and plug and remediate well sites.

- This initiative supports Tribal land rights, economic opportunities, and environmental protection.
- The funding comes from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which provides \$4.7 billion to address orphaned wells nationwide.
- Orphaned wells pose risks to public health, safety, and the environment, including groundwater contamination and methane emissions.

The Caddo Nation’s award is substantial, being the second-largest among the four Tribes mentioned. This funding will enable the Nation to take significant steps in addressing environmental concerns on Tribal lands, creating jobs, and protecting natural resources.

Caddo Nation SORNA Program: Ensuring Community Safety Through Diligent Sex Offender Registration

The Caddo Nation of Oklahoma has been at the forefront of implementing the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) to enhance public safety within our community. This article highlights the crucial work of our SORNA program and its recent achievements.

What is SORNA?

SORNA, part of the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, establishes comprehensive standards for sex offender registration across the United States. The Caddo Nation has embraced these standards, demonstrating our commitment to protecting our members, especially our children.

Caddo Nation’s SORNA Implementation

Our tribe’s SORNA program, operated under the Caddo Nation Sex Offender Registry, has made significant strides in recent years. The program ensures that sex offenders residing, working, or attending school within Caddo Nation lands are properly registered and monitored.

Key aspects of our program include:

- Comprehensive registration process
- Regular updates to the offender database
- Community notifications
- Collaboration with other jurisdictions

Recent Achievements

In September 2010, the Caddo Nation became one of the first tribes to have their SORNA imple-

mentation plan approved by the SMART Office of the U.S. Department of Justice. This achievement underscores our dedication to maintaining the highest standards of public safety.

Our SORNA team has also developed strong partnerships with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, enhancing our ability to track and monitor registered sex offenders effectively.

Public Access to Information

The Caddo Nation is committed to transparency and public safety. Our sex offender registry is accessible to the public through the following websites:

- Caddo Nation Sex Offender Registry: caddo.nsopw.gov
- Oklahoma Department of Corrections: doc.state.ok.us

- National Sex Offender Website: nsopw.gov

These websites provide valuable information about

registered sex offenders, including their physical description, photograph, and current address.

For more information about the Caddo Nation SORNA program, please contact:
Caddo Nation Sex Offender Registry
Attn: SORNA Registration Coordinator
PO Box 487
Binger, OK 73009

Nyles Parton - SORNA Grants Administrator
Baylen Bullcoming - SORNA Registry Coordinator

Phone: 405.656.2344

The Caddo Nation SORNA program stands as a testament to our tribe’s commitment to safety and justice. By diligently implementing these crucial registration and notification processes, we continue to protect our community and set an example for effective tribal governance.

Guardians of the Nation: The Caddo Emergency Management Team

When disaster strikes, the Caddo Nation Emergency Management team stands ready to respond. Led by Emergency Manager Polly Edwards and Deputy EM Jerome McCalvin, alongside Emergency Management Response Officer Scott Anderson, this dedicated trio brings decades of experience and a passion for service to their critical roles protecting the Caddo people and surrounding communities.

“We meet people on the very worst day of their life,” Edwards reflects. It’s a sobering reality that drives her team’s mission to be prepared for any crisis. From tornadoes and floods to wildfires and mass casualty events, Oklahoma faces a diverse array of natural and man-made threats. In fact, the state ranks third nationally in federally declared disasters, behind only Texas and California.

“Oklahoma is number one in those federally declared [disasters] by the diversity,” McCalvin explains. “We have floods. We have tornadoes, we have ice storms, we have snow storms, we have had effects from hurricanes with the mass flooding come in, especially southeastern parts of the state.”

This puts the Caddo Nation and surrounding Caddo County squarely in harm’s way. “Caddo County in Oklahoma is the county number one in the total number of declarations by county that have been done by the governor for federal disaster,” McCalvin notes. In the eighteen years that EM Polly Edwards has served the Caddo Nation as the creator

Building a Resilient Nation

Faced with these daunting statistics, Edwards, McCalvin, and Anderson have made it their mission to build a robust emergency management program from the ground up. When Edwards took on the role in 2007, the Nation had virtually no emergency preparedness infrastructure in place.

“When I came here, we had nothing at all,” she recalls. “So everything for emergency management we have here, I’ve built from the ground up, because we had no program whatsoever.”

Over the past 17 years, Edwards has leveraged her expertise in environmental protection and grant writing to secure critical funding and resources. From emergency response trailers and communications equipment to a state-of-the-art mobile shelter system, she has methodically assembled the tools needed to protect the Caddo people.

One of her proudest achievements was se-

““We always try to come up with something that people should have and need - emergency kits, either for their car or for their home.””

curing a grant to install over 200 tornado shelters for tribal members. “I wrote a half a million dollar grant for that,”

Edwards shares. “208 tornado shelters. In six months we put the first one in beginning of September, the last one in the last day of February.”

This hands-on approach and relentless drive to improve preparedness exemplifies the team’s ethos. As McCalvin puts it, their focus is on the “LIP” - Lives, Incident stability, and Property preservation.

“Of course, most of all is at least alive,” he emphasizes. “We don’t want to lose people, but being able to have these response teams, but also being able to [do] emergency management things that we’re doing is we’re trying - we want people to be prepared to not become a statistic.”

Man’s Best Friend in Emergency Response

Adding another layer to the team’s capabilities is Scott Anderson, the Caddo Nation Emergency Management Officer. Anderson brings a unique asset to the team: two highly trained search and rescue dogs. These canine heroes play a crucial role in locating missing persons during disasters or other emergencies.

“Our search and rescue dogs are an invaluable resource,” Anderson explains. “They can cover large areas quickly and access spaces that might be difficult or dangerous for human rescuers. In a disaster situation, every minute counts, and these dogs can make the difference between life and death.”

Anderson’s dedication to his canine partners extends far beyond the emergency scene. As their primary caretaker, he ensures they receive ongoing

“We always try to come up with something that people should have and need - emergency kits, either for their car or for their home.”

training, proper nutrition, and the care they need to perform at their best when duty calls.

“These dogs aren’t just tools – they’re part of our team, part of our family,” Anderson says. “The bond between a handler and their search and rescue dog is incredibly strong. We trust each other with our lives.”

A Culture of Preparedness

Central to their strategy is cultivating a culture of preparedness within the Caddo Nation and surrounding communities. The team regularly distributes emergency kits, conducts training sessions, and participates in preparedness events to equip tribal members with potentially life-saving knowledge and supplies.

“We’ve given out flashlights, we’ve given out special emergency kits for your car,” Edwards shares. “We always try to come up with something that people should have and need - emergency kits, either for their car or for their home.” But perhaps their most ambitious initiative is the upcoming Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training program. This intensive course, funded by the Oklahoma Department of Homeland Security, will empower community members to support professional first responders during large-scale emergencies.

“What it is, is to

“Our search and rescue dogs are an invaluable resource.”

help create a volunteer emergency response team that can be an assistant to your area responders like the fire, police, the ambulance,” McCalvin explains. “There are times when you have a big major disaster, these folks can be trained to help do first aid medical care. They can be taught how to use a fire extinguisher and do put-outs. They’re taught how to do search and rescue.”

The comprehensive training covers everything from disaster medical operations to light search and rescue, providing graduates with a well-rounded

skill set to support their communities in times of crisis. And importantly, these volunteer teams can be deployed anywhere in Oklahoma to assist other tribes and communities in need.

“This team can be called and go anywhere in the state,” McCalvin notes. “They could go up to any other tribe, any other community.”

For Edwards, Mc-

Calvin, and Anderson, this emphasis on mutual aid and cooperation is at the heart of effective emergency management. They’ve cultivated strong partnerships with surrounding jurisdictions, state agencies, and non-governmental organizations to ensure a coordinated response when disaster strikes.

“Good partners make good neighbors,” Edwards asserts. “And they respond to the Caddo Nation because they know who the Caddo Nation is.”

This collaborative approach has paid dividends during past emergencies. Edwards recalls how these partnerships proved invaluable during the devastating 2013 Moore tornado:

“I was the planning chief during the last - it’s 2013 Moore tornado. I helped with the planning in the distribution warehouse

good neighbor, then where do you live?”

This inclusive approach reflects the team’s holistic view of community resilience. As Edwards puts it: “We should care for all our neighbors in there, and not handpick whether they’re Kiowa, white, Mexican - we should care for everyone.”

Innovating for the Future

As the threats facing the Caddo Nation evolve, so too does the emergency management team’s toolkit. One of their most impressive recent acquisitions is a state-of-the-art mobile shelter system secured through a Tribal Homeland Security grant.

“It’s a 20 by 30 pop-up tent,” Edwards explains proudly. “It goes up - two people can put it up, one person can put it up,



and five minutes, it’s up. It is able to be deployed in five minutes.”

This versatile shelter comes equipped with air conditioning, heating, LED lighting, and dual generators. It can be configured for various uses, from medical triage to drive-through testing sites.

“We actually use it down here to do the vaccination clinic for like the flu clinic. And also for COVID testing,” Edwards notes. “We take out the floor, roll it up, and cars can drive straight through it.”

Innovations like these showcase the team’s forward-thinking approach and commitment to staying ahead of emerging threats. They’re constantly seeking new ways to enhance their capabilities and better serve the Caddo people.

A Vision for a Mighty Nation

Underlying all of their efforts is a profound dedication to the Caddo Nation and its people. Edwards, McCalvin, and Anderson see their work as part of a larger mission to restore the tribe to a position of strength and prominence.

“Our tribal chairman, Bobby Gonzalez, one of the things he challenged to put before us back last year was that the desire that he had as a chairman was to make the Caddo Nation once again, a mighty nation, a nation that’s recognized,” McCalvin shares.

This vision drives

the emergency management team to continually push boundaries and strive for excellence in all they do. Their goal is nothing less than to make the Caddo Nation a model of resilience and preparedness for tribes across the country.

“I want people to talk about the Caddo Nation,” McCalvin declares passionately. “Hey, look where they were, look where we can - look, they’re progressing. They’re moving forward. And I want our folks to see that and to know that we haven’t forgotten - that that hasn’t been forgotten, that we’re revitalized, that we’ll not let that die.”

For Edwards, McCalvin, and Anderson, this means not just responding to crises, but proactively working to build a stronger, more resilient community every single day. It’s a commitment they carry

with them in everything they do.

“That’s what drives us to what we do every day,” McCalvin reflects. “Based on this what we’re doing. You know, that’s my guess what? But that’s just - that’s that’s -”

His voice trails off, but the sentiment is clear. For the Caddo Nation Emergency Management team, their work is more than just a job - it’s a sacred duty to protect and empower their people. Through their tireless efforts and innovative approaches, they’re not just preparing for disasters - they’re helping to shape a brighter future for the entire Caddo Nation.

As Edwards puts it simply but powerfully: “We want it to be used.” Whether it’s their state-of-the-art shelter, their emergency response capabilities, or the knowledge and skills they impart to community members, the team is determined to make every resource count in service of their people.

In a world of increasing uncertainty, the Caddo Nation can rest assured that they have dedicated guardians watching over them, ready to spring into action at a moment’s notice. Edwards, McCalvin, Anderson, and their growing team of trained volunteers – including the four-legged heroes – stand as a testament to the resilience and strength of the Caddo people - a mighty nation indeed.



Meet Bella: Caddo Nation’s Newest Four-Legged Protector

The Caddo Nation Security Department is proud to introduce its latest member: Bella, a highly trained 5-year-old German Shepherd serving as our new Security Patrol Dog. This addition to our team represents a significant enhancement to our community’s safety and security measures.

A Dog of Many Talents

Bella isn’t just any patrol dog. She comes to us with an impressive set of skills that make her an invaluable asset to our security forces. Her training includes:

- Agility
- Search and tracking
- Specialized bite training

What sets Bella apart is her unique ability to respond to commands in the Czech language, adding an extra layer of control and precision to her operations. While her primary function is to bite on command, she’s also trained to respond autonomously to specific threats, showcasing her intelligence and adaptability.

More Than Just a Guard Dog

- Obedience

Nyles Parton, Caddo Nation Security Director and Bella’s handler, emphasizes that Bella is more than just a deterrent. “Bella represents our commitment to utilizing cutting-edge security measures to protect our community,” Parton states. “Her presence alone can prevent many security issues, but her extensive training means she’s ready for any situation that may arise.” Parton, who has the crucial responsibility of deploying Bella’s skills for the benefit of the Caddo Nation, sees her as a symbol of the nation’s proactive approach to community safety.

Meet Bella in Person

The Caddo Nation Security Department encourages community members to get to know Bella. While she’s a working dog with serious responsibilities, controlled introductions can help the community understand her role and importance.

For those interested in learning more about Bella or the Caddo Nation’s security initiatives, please contact:

Nyles Parton

Caddo Nation Security Director
Phone: 405.345.9851
Address: 117 Memorial Lane, Binger, OK 73009

Remember, while Bella is a friendly presence in our community, she is a working dog with an important job. Always ask for permission before approaching or interacting with her.

The introduction of Bella to our security team represents the Caddo Nation’s ongoing commitment to community safety and innovative law enforcement strategies. Thank you, Bella!



Sedona Howell, Caddo Nation member and daughter of Dex Howell (son of Marion Bunky Howell) is walking with her mother Joyce across the Golden Gate Bridge, using their Caddo umbrella.

American Indian Exposition Returns to Anadarko This Fall

89th Annual Event Celebrates Rich Cultural Heritage of Oklahoma Tribes

The American Indian Exposition, a beloved tradition celebrating the diverse cultures of Oklahoma’s Native American tribes, is set to make its grand return to Anadarko this fall. Scheduled for October 30 through November 2, 2024 at the Caddo County Fairgrounds, the 89th annual event promises four days packed with cultural exhibitions, competitions, and family-friendly activities.

Pete Neconie, the newly appointed President of the Indian Expo committee, is working tirelessly to revitalize this historic gathering. A member of the Kiowa, Pawnee and Otoe tribes, Neconie brings a lifetime of cherished Expo memories and a vision for rekindling the event’s former glory. “The Indian Expo to me means everything,” Neconie says passionately. “This is about our culture. This is about our way of life. We have so many different tribes within the area. Everything is different and we don’t do enough every day.”

A Rich History

The American Indian Exposition has deep roots in Oklahoma, tracing back to the Indian Fairs held at Craterville Park near Cache from 1924 to 1933. In 1935, the event was officially chartered and moved to Anadarko, where it has been a cornerstone of cul-

tural celebration for nearly nine decades.

Neconie fondly recalls the Expos of his youth: “Until we moved away in the 80s, as soon as you drove in [to the Caddo County fairgrounds], it was packed with tents. They had their fire pits. They were cooking, they were doing everything.”

The event drew visitors from far and wide. “People came from other states and other countries to see this,” Neconie notes. “We rarely have that [now].”

Reviving Traditions, Creating New Memories

This year’s Expo aims to recapture that spirit while adapting to modern times. Neconie and his team are working to bring back many beloved traditions:

- Opening and Closing Parades: Kicking off on Wednesday, October 30, and concluding on Saturday, November 2, both at 10am.
- Cultural Exhibitions: Showcasing the unique dances and traditions of participating tribes.
- Powwow: A cornerstone of the four-day celebration.
- Camping: Encouraging attendees to fully immerse themselves in the event.
- Competitions: Including art, dance, softball, horseshoes, and more.
- Beautiful Baby Contest
- 5K Run and Fun Walk
- Bow Shoot
- Gourd Dance Sessions
- Gospel Singing
- Big Foot Storytelling

New additions for 2024 include a carnival, pumpkin carving contest, and expanded tribal dance exhibitions.

“We’re going to try to bring back a lot of things that haven’t been done in a long time,” Neconie explains. “Like a lot of the dancing exhibitions from each of the tribes that are participating, their cultural presentation throughout the afternoon at different locations.”

Family Traditions and Cherished Memories

For Neconie, the Expo is deeply intertwined with family traditions. He fondly recalls how his grandmother, Eva Neconie, was a steadfast presence at the event. “My grandma, on my dad’s side, her name was Eva Neconie, she camped regardless,” he reminisces. “And there, back then, when they camped, it was you don’t go home. Doesn’t matter how far you live away from if you’re down the street, you’re moving and you camp, you stay there.”

This commitment to fully immersing in the Expo experience was a value passed down through generations. “We instilled that, and a lot of us that, you know, that’s a big deal,” Neconie explains.

The camping aspect of the Expo wasn’t just about convenience; it was a crucial part of the cultural experience. Neconie shares an insight from one of his relatives about the historical significance of these campsites: “One of my relatives mentioned to me, he said, long time ago, it used to be little, little tribal camps, like Pawnees and Otoes and the Caddos and Wichita. They all used to have the little areas that they camped in, and that would be something to see. And if we could have that...”

This image of distinct tribal camps, each with its own customs and traditions, paints a vivid picture of the Expo’s rich cultural tapestry. It’s a vision that Neconie hopes to revive in future events.

Among the many cultural presentations, Neconie is particularly excited about bringing back some of the more spectacular performances. “We used to have all the exhibitions, spear and shield dance, Eagle dance, Apache fire dancers used to come out there,” he recalls. These dynamic displays of traditional skills and artistry were once a highlight of the Expo, drawing crowds and preserving important cultural practices.

A Celebration For All

Neconie emphasizes that the Expo is about more than just the powwow. “To me, it’s not about just the powwow,” he says. “This is more of we used to have all the exhibitions, spear and shield dance, Eagle dance, Apache fire dancers used to come out there. Gourd dance was one of the biggest things back then. That’s where it came out. That’s where they revived it was right there during the expo.”

The event aims to offer something for everyone, from elders sharing stories to children participating in youth activities. “We’re trying to do [these events] for the community again,” Neconie says. “Because we don’t do them anymore. And my biggest thing is that I would rather do that and get everybody occupied for a couple of days... rather than sitting at home and dealing with all these different issues that

we have going on, trying to make something better for the community.”

A Unique Experience

For visitors from outside the Native American community, the Expo offers an unparalleled opportunity to experience the rich cultural tapestry of Oklahoma’s tribes. “No other state has 39 tribes in it,” Neconie points out. This concentration of diverse Native cultures in one place makes the American Indian Exposition a truly unique event.

Community Support Needed

Organizing such a large-scale event is no small feat, and Neconie is calling on the community for support. “We are looking for volunteers,” he says. “We can’t give them anything or promise them anything, you know. But if I can get out there, and I can push a little bit more, and I can put efforts into to make their jobs a little bit easier. Then that’s what it takes.”

Financial support is also crucial. “Budget is the biggest thing,” Neconie explains. “Having money to run this... It takes money to make things function.”

The Expo team is reaching out to tribal leaders and programs for sponsorship and participation. Tribes that donate \$10,000 or more will secure a spot in the first five of the tribal lineups for the opening day parade.

Looking to the Future

While honoring tradition, Neconie also sees the Expo as an opportunity

to engage younger generations. “This younger generation, for them to step up and really get involved in this, you know, it’s really something, and it can be something again,” he says.

His vision extends beyond the four-day event. “These are things we could do throughout the year, different times of the months, you know, for different tournaments,” Neconie suggests. “So it keeps everybody doing something.”

How to Get Involved

The American Indian Exposition committee welcomes volunteers, sponsors, and participants. Those interested in getting involved can attend the next planning meeting on Wednesday, September 18, from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Apache AOA in Anadarko.

For more information or to volunteer, contact:

- President Pete Neconie: 405-402-7112
- Vice President Bambi Allen: 405-423-0788
- Secretary Jame Lyn Hamilton: 720-692-9735
- Treasurer Alan Yeahquo

As the leaves begin to turn and autumn approaches, anticipation builds for this celebration of Native American heritage. The 89th American Indian Exposition promises to be a vibrant showcase of culture, community, and tradition. Mark your calendars for October 30 - November 2, 2024, and join in this uniquely Oklahoma celebration at the Caddo County Fairgrounds in Anadarko.

Caddo Nation Launches SAKU: Powering Native Tribes Through Solar Energy

In a groundbreaking move that combines traditional values with cutting-edge technology, the Caddo Nation has launched SAKU, a joint venture with EightTwenty Solar aimed at empowering Native tribes through sustainable solar energy solutions. This innovative partnership marks a significant step forward in tribal economic development and environmental stewardship.

The Power of the Sun: SAKU’s Mission

SAKU, which means “sun” in the Caddo language, is more than just a name – it’s a mission. The company is dedicated

to harnessing the power of the sun to bring energy independence, cost reduction, and economic growth to tribal communities across Indian Country.

Chairman Bobby Gonzalez of the Caddo Nation emphasizes the significance of this venture: “SAKU solar is how we say sun in Caddo. We created a company, a joint venture with 820, and it’s our first joint venture in the Solar World. The idea is to teach other tribes how to invest in solar to help them cut down on the kilowatts, which would help cut down on emissions.”

A Timely Opportunity for Tribes

The launch of SAKU comes at a crucial moment for Native tribes. With the December 31, 2024 deadline to obligate American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars approaching, tribes have a unique opportunity to invest in sustainable infrastructure.

Zackeree Kelin, Vice Chairman of the Caddo Nation Economic

Development Authority, explains: “We have a historic level of funding in Indian country that we want tribes to be able to take advantage of, to invest in their sustainability, of their programs, of their infrastructure, and also contribute to the physical resilience of their communities.”

SAKU: A Comprehensive Solution for Tribal Solar Needs

SAKU offers a turnkey solution designed specifically for the needs of Indian Country. Adam Luck, Chief Sales Officer at EightTwenty, outlines the company’s approach: “We’ve got all in-house solutions, all of our employees are W2 employees, which is unique in the solar space. This allows us to have a lot of control over the products and consistency of the product that we offer in the experience that we offer our customers.”

The company’s services include:

- Project design and imple-

mentation

- Assistance with federal incentives and funding opportunities

- Expertise in tribal-specific needs and regulations

- Long-term financial and environmental benefits planning

Case Study: Caddo Nation Child Care Center

A prime example of SAKU’s capabilities is already underway with the Caddo Nation’s new state-of-the-art child care and community center. This facility, being built by the tribe’s own construction company, Arrowood Kak-inah, will be fully powered by solar energy installed by SAKU.

Chairman Gonzalez highlights the benefits: “We don’t have to pay an electric bill. We can sell the electricity back to the grid. We’re building green, and then we’re able to use our own companies, putting our own solar that we 100% own through SAKU solar.”

Beyond Energy: Economic Development and Environmental Stewardship

SAKU represents more than just an energy solution – it’s a pathway to economic sovereignty and environmental responsibility. Kelin emphasizes this holistic approach: “Renewables are one way in which a lot of those sort of concentric circles meet. You know, you have green infrastructure, you have economic development opportunities, and then you’re also solving problems that our communities have dealt with for so long.”

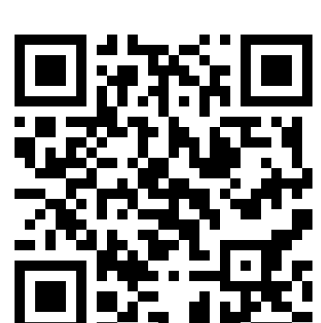
A Call to Action for Tribes

As SAKU embarks on its mission to power Native tribes through solar energy, the company invites other tribes and businesses to join in this transformative journey. To learn more about how SAKU can benefit your community, visit go-saku.com to book a consultation.

Remember SAKU’s powerful tagline: “SAKU: Powering Native Tribes through solar energy. A joint venture between the Caddo Nation and EightTwenty.”

In launching SAKU, the Caddo Nation is not just investing in solar panels – it’s investing in a brighter, more sustainable future for Native communities across the country. As Chairman Gonzalez puts it, “We want to be able to help not only our own people with our own company, but we’re also looking at helping our individual family members related to housing. What does solar look like related to housing needs?”

With SAKU, the answer to that question is becoming clearer every day – and it’s as bright as the sun itself.



www.go-saku.com

Caddo Nation Leads the Charge in Clean Energy Innovation

In a bold move towards a sustainable future, the Caddo Nation is making significant strides in the realm of clean energy. At

convert our existing energy sources to cleaner alternatives. It’s about taking what we have and transforming it into something that will

2. Geothermal Energy: Collaborating with the University of Oklahoma (OU) and Oklahoma State University (OSU), the Caddo Nation



the helm of this initiative is Chairman Bobby Gonzalez, whose expertise in energy is driving the tribe’s efforts to secure a greener, more prosperous future for generations to come.

The Birth of Clean Energy Power

At the heart of this ambitious endeavor is Clean Energy Power, a subsidiary established under the Caddo Nation Economic Development Authority. This entity is tasked with a crucial mission: focusing on clean energy and navigating the complex transition to more sustainable power sources.

Chairman Gonzalez explains the impetus behind this initiative: “We’re in an oil and gas state, but we need to come up with cleaner sources of energy or

cut down emissions while remaining economically viable.”

A Multifaceted Approach to Clean Energy

The Caddo Nation’s approach to clean energy is comprehensive and forward-thinking. Clean Energy Power is exploring various avenues, including:

1. Hydrogen Technology: The company is investigating the potential of blue hydrogen, which involves converting natural gas into a cleaner energy source. “We have plenty of natural gas in Oklahoma,” Gonzalez notes. “The question is, how do we change its chemistry, transport it, and use it more sustainably?”

is tapping into groundbreaking geothermal technology. This renewable energy source has caught the attention of Congress and the Department of Energy, with significant funding being allocated for its development across tribal lands.

3. Solar and Wind Power: While traditional renewables like solar and wind make up a smaller portion of the current energy mix, Clean Energy Power recognizes their growing importance and is incorporating them into their long-term strategy.

4. Cleaner Fossil Fuels: Acknowledging the current reliance on fossil fuels, the company is also looking at ways to make these traditional energy sources

cleaner, such as innovative methods to burn coal more efficiently and with lower emissions.

Building Strategic Partnerships

The Caddo Nation understands that tackling the clean energy challenge requires collaboration. Clean Energy Power has been forging crucial partnerships to drive its mission forward:

University Collaborations: The partnership with OU has been instrumental, particularly in the realm of geothermal technology. This collaboration highlights the power of combining academic research with practical application.

Government Agencies: The company is working closely with the Department of Energy, EPA, and other federal agencies to secure funding and support for renewable energy projects.

Other Tribal Nations: Recognizing the shared interests and challenges faced by Native American tribes, Clean Energy Power is reaching out to other nations, such as the Citizen Potawatomi, to collaborate on energy initiatives.

Department of Defense: The DoD has shown interest in the Caddo Nation’s clean energy efforts, potentially opening doors for future collaborations and support.

The Symposium: A Gathering of Minds

To further its goals, Clean Energy Power is organizing a major symposium on Energy Renewables in Oklahoma. This event will bring together tribes, government officials, academics, and industry experts to discuss the future of clean energy in the state.

“We’re hoping to have the Secretary of Energy as our keynote speaker,”

Gonzalez reveals. “Her expertise in geothermal energy aligns perfectly with our initiatives, and it would be a great opportunity to showcase the innovative work happening right here in Oklahoma.”

Overcoming Challenges

The path to clean energy is not without its obstacles. Chairman Gonzalez acknowledges the complexities involved:

“There’s pushback from some quarters, especially regarding the use of natural gas in hydrogen production. But we are looking at the bigger picture – how can we transition from where we are now to where we need to be, in a way that’s both environmentally responsible and economically viable for our tribe?”

The company is also navigating the intricate world of energy policy, working with policymakers to ensure that the transition to cleaner energy sources considers the unique needs and resources of tribal nations.

Economic Development and Environmental Stewardship

Clean Energy Power is not just about energy – it’s a crucial part of the Caddo Nation’s economic development strategy. The company is exploring opportunities to clean up environmental damage from past energy extraction activities, create jobs in new energy sectors, and ensure a stable financial future for the tribe.

“We’re going to start cleaning up these lands environmentally,” Gonzalez states. “We’re also looking at developing our own energy resources and having our own energy production. It’s about finding a way to fund the tribe in perpetuity while also being responsible

stewards of the land.”

A Leader with Vision

Chairman Bobby Gonzalez’s background in energy brings a unique perspective to this initiative. His passion for protecting natural resources while ensuring the tribe’s economic prosperity is evident in every aspect of Clean Energy Power’s work.

“We’re making a conscious decision to look at cleaner sources of energy,” Gonzalez emphasizes. “But we’re also being realistic about the transition. We’re going to drill, if necessary, we’re going to tax energy companies operating on our land, and we’re going to explore every avenue to create a sustainable future for our people.”

Looking to the Future

As Clean Energy Power continues to grow and evolve, the Caddo Nation is positioning itself at the forefront of the clean energy revolution. By combining traditional knowledge with innovative technology, fostering strategic partnerships, and leveraging its natural resources, the tribe is creating a model for sustainable development that could have far-reaching impacts.

The journey towards clean energy is complex and challenging, but under the leadership of Chairman Gonzalez and through initiatives like Clean Energy Power, the Caddo Nation is demonstrating that it is possible to balance economic growth, environmental stewardship, and cultural preservation. As the clean energy landscape continues to evolve, all eyes will be on the innovative solutions emerging from this forward-thinking tribal nation.





List of Caddo Members On Their Journey

William T. Bedoka January 3rd, 2020	Douglas L. Williams December 8th, 2020	Kenny Robinson June 28th, 2021	91. Dorothy Faye Garrett March 28th, 2022	120. Ivan Jerome Garibay March 9th, 2023	146. Gayla Brown November 16th, 2023
Lucy Wabanasee January 6th, 2020	Vermona Collins December 17th, 2020	Ladonna Reddick June 30th, 2021	92. Bobby Dob Priddy March 29th, 2022	121. William Russell Albin March 17th, 2023	147. Laura Katherine Wolf Proctor November 28th, 2023
Domonic Robinson January 9th, 2020	Sherry Lee January 14th, 2021	Ira Parnell Toshovik August 21st, 2021	93. Michael A. Figuero May 24th, 2022	122. Monetta C. Williams-Bradley April 3rd, 2023	148. Rosalind Louise Dillon December 18th, 2023
Frank Patrick Williams January 17th, 2020	Patricia O’Neal January 18th, 2021	William W. Reeder August 29th, 2021	94. Quiten R. Whitlock June 10th, 2022	123. Rodney Glen Jones April 4th, 2023	149. Justin Paul Miller January 8th, 2024
Bonnie Smith Beaver February 27th, 2020	Makayla Taylor January 25th, 2021	Raul Billy Lee Avina September 7th, 2021	95. Lauren Stumblingbear June 22nd, 2022	124. Calvin Lee Branch April 8th, 2023	150. William Thomas Hazlett March 3rd, 2024
Seth Riley Phillips - March 30th, 2020	Trisha Corrina Roulain February 1st, 2021	Ellen White Scales September 19th, 2021	96. Charlie J. Hicks, Jr. July 4th, 2022	125. Mary Lois Isaac April 12th, 2023	151. Michael Joe Brown March 4th, 2024
Charles B. Thompson April 3rd, 2020	Carol Ann James February 1st, 2021	Eric Edwards September 23rd, 2021	97. Sirius Crumbry July 13th, 2022	126. Marilyn Sage McDonald April 20th, 2023	152. Darrel Dean Smith March 11th, 2024
Susie Stillman April 8th, 2020	Elvern Edge February 3rd, 2021	Mary Lou Onarsee October 7th, 2021	98. Paula Cain July 18th, 2022	127. Theresa Michelle Williams April 22nd, 2023	153. Emily Loraine Geimausaddle March 23rd, 2024
Meagan Edge April 19th, 2020	Steve K. Wilson February 8th, 2021	Gladson Frank November 8th, 2021	99. Charrise Beatty July 18th, 2022	128. John Brent Tate - April 25th, 2023	154. Alfred Charles Williams March 26th, 2024
Milton Nichols April 23rd, 2020	Twila Longhat Baskett February 9th, 2021	Pearl Joyce Smith November 25th, 2021	100. Michael Barcindebar August 7th, 2022	129. James Robert LeBlanc April 27th, 2023	155. Kenneth White March 27th, 2024
Madeline Frank Hamilton April 29th, 2020	Bonnie Christine Noah February 9th, 2021	Boone Hazlette Jr. December 5th, 2021	101. David N. Whitebead August 18th, 2022	130. Michael Pickering May 8th, 2023	156. Michael Howard Selling March 30th, 2024
Curtis Harjo April 29th, 2020	Samuel L. Parton February 22nd, 2021	Katherine Pierce December 6th, 2021	102. David A. Leemhuis August 20th, 2022	131. Cassandra Marie Weathers May 26th, 2023	157. Sigrid F.D.G. Gunn-Medina May 7th, 2024
Raylynn M. Stanton May 6th, 2020	Roger R. Jones - February 24th, 2021	Tracey Bear December 7th, 2021	103. Kurk K. Kestler September 28th, 2022	132. Lois Fern Decker June 2nd, 2023	158. Thomas Merle Keyes May 18th, 2024
Brylynn Stanton May 6th, 2020	Elvern Edge March 8th, 2021	Mark Anthony Butler December 19th, 2021	104. Ian Z. Kestler September 28th, 2022	133. Kailoh Russell Smith June 23rd, 2023 (Infant)	159. O’Dell Bowens Jr. May 24th, 2024
John Howard Treat May 26th, 2020	Carol A. Smith March 11th, 2021	Elvern Scott Edge December 31st, 2021	105. Edith Choate September 30th, 2022	134. Erin Nicole Barbier July 2023 (exact date not provided)	160. Waunda L. Querdibitty June 14th, 2024
Diania L. Carson-Wykoﬀ June 17th, 2020	Robert P. Bear March 15th, 2021	Natasha Scott January 5th, 2022	106. Angel Jimenez October 17th, 2022	135. Guyneth Bedoka Caldwell August 2nd, 2023	161. Allen Richard Williams June 28th, 2024
Bobby Dee Edwards June 23rd, 2020	Willard Guy Jr. March 17th, 2021	George Elmer Butler - Jan- uary 12th, 2022	107. Charles F. Cotter October 24th, 2022	136. Marilyn Williams Threlkeld August 8th, 2023	162. Mary Jo Jerome July 16th, 2024
Gerald De Wayne Smith June 23rd, 2020	Gerald D. Smith March 30th, 2021	Darrell Wayne Arnold January 17th, 2022	108. Charlotte A. Thompson November 5th, 2022	137. Lyndell Otis Warren Jr. September 4th, 2023	163. Rebecca Faulkner Johns July 17th, 2024
John Wayne Kionut July 20th, 2020	Michael D. Williams April 3rd, 2021	Jesse Jerald Jones January 20th, 2022	109. Artie Baskett November 16th, 2022	138. Mildred Lucinda Jackson September 11th, 2023	164. Tommy Wayne Britton July 19th, 2024
Janie Smith Tartsah September 10th, 2020	Charlotte R. Bentley April 4th, 2021	Paul Raymond Carson Jr. January 24th, 2022	110. Harold Glen Reddick November 19th, 2022	139. Arley Clayton Beaver September 17th, 2023	165. Ethel Mae Dillion-Davis July 6th, 2024
Lupe Ramos Jr. September 25th, 2020	Daniel Carson April 4th, 2021	Timothy James Bunn February 15th, 2022	111. Billy Ray Decker December 7th, 2022	140. Jackie Larue Harmon October 7th, 2023	166. Darroll Joe Reddick August 23rd, 2024
William (Billy) Bedoka September 30th, 2020	George E. Butler April 5th, 2021	Mary Louise Downing-Davis February 17th, 2022	112. Gerald Joe Martin December 31st, 2022	141. Ronald F. Subia October 22nd, 2023	167. Rodney Lynn Mason September 8th, 2024
Patricia Donnes Brown-Rocha October 7th, 2020	Pauline Subia April 10th, 2021	Donald Lee Quiver February 18th, 2022	113. James Richard Lacey January 15th, 2023	142. James E. Sellers October 22nd, 2023	168. Shawn Russell White September 1st, 2024
Jennifer Regalado (Infant-Mom) October 14th, 2020	Oscar Selling April 21st, 2021	Kaylee Marie Davis March 2nd, 2022	114. Virginia Stalesky January 23rd, 2023	143. De Lois Firanski October 28th, 2023	169. Lewis Leroy Lowrie Jr. September 17th, 2024
Lymon Kionute Sr. October 19th, 2020	Bruce A. Bedoka May 17th, 2021	Kwai Chang Jones March 5th, 2022	115. Alfred Myers Bert February 2nd, 2023	144. Krista Louise Kanewisher November 10th, 2023	170. Ashley Kristine Cross – September 5th, 2024
Valerie Wooster-Thornton November 3rd, 2020	Ozell Littleton III May 22nd, 2021	John Daniel Hupp March 8th, 2022	116. Isaac J. Jimenez February 6th, 2023	145. Dawn Lei Johnson November 13th, 2023	171. Matthew Whitebead September 19th, 2024
Jeffie A. Garner November 5th, 2020	Bobby Lee Whitmire May 31st, 2021	88. Catherine Frances Kionute March 15th, 2022	117. Marilyn Williams Brock February 13th, 2023		
Bobby Joe Edwards November 9th, 2020	Sheila K. Perez June 16th, 2021	89. Joseph Levi Edwards March 18th, 2022	118. Joyce Ruth Hines February 27th, 2023		
Marquetia Simpson November 23rd, 2020	Dekota Espinoza June 19th, 2021	90. Cindy Lou Sturm March 24th, 2022	119. Laverne M. Pickering March 3rd, 2023		
Patricia Miller Branch December 4th, 2020	Lahoma Jean Lewis June 28th, 2021				