

AUG 2025

THE SHAWNEE JOURNAL

KINWIKIISFWA
"long month"

YA'SASILAWIIYAKWE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

"WHAT WE ARE GOING TO DO"

- AUG 4** MONTHLY BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING
MIAMI, OK
- AUG 11** LUNCH & LEARN MONDAYS: IMPROVING COMMUNICATION SKILLS
MORE INFO ON PAGE 7
- AUG 22** GRAND OPENING: GOLDEN MESA HOTEL & CASINO EXPANSION
GUYMON, OK
- AUG 25** LUNCH & LEARN MONDAYS: MANAGING SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA
- TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF LABOR DAY
- SEP 1** HIGHER EDUCATION AWARDS FALL TERM DEADLINE
MORE INFO ON PAGE 22
- SCHOOL CLOTHING & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM DEADLINE
MORE INFO ON PAGE 22

TO VIEW ALL UPCOMING EVENTS, OFFICE CLOSURES, AND MORE, VISIT [SHAWNEE-NSN.GOV/CALENDAR](https://shawnee-nsn.gov/calendar) ONLINE OR SCAN HERE WITH YOUR PHONE:



- SEP 2** MONTHLY BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING
MIAMI, OK
- ELECTIONS: DEADLINE TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT
- SEP 14** SHAWNEE VIP PREVIEW AT FAMILY DISCOVERY CENTER
MORE INFO ON PAGE 15
- ELECTIONS: DEADLINE TO RETURN VOTED ABSENTEE BALLOTS
BY 5:00 PM CDT
- SEP 19-20** 2025 ELECTION & GENERAL COUNCIL WEEKEND
MORE INFO ON PAGE 15
- OCT 6** TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF TECUMSEH MEMORIAL DAY
- OCT 7** MONTHLY BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING
MIAMI, OK
- OCT 13** TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' DAY
- NOV 2** DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS

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2025 READERSHIP SURVEY

Dear reader,

skata ke'notoolepe (We want to hear from you). Starting in 2023, we introduced two regular features in every issue of this quarterly newsletter—"weemeyakwe," with a focus on the tribe's heritage, ancestors, and homelands, and "maalaakwahi ke'neemepe," which highlights new and ongoing initiatives. Last year, we added another section dedicated to vitalizing the Shawnee language, and in February, we began publishing a list that memorializes fellow tribal citizens who have recently passed away. As we strive to continue enhancing The Shawnee Journal, we are eager to hear your feedback on the newsletter's present format and suggestions for its future. Your insights are vital to helping our media team remain small and effective while continuing to deliver the most useful and noteworthy tribal news and stories.

To participate in our 2025 Readership Survey, scan this code with your smartphone or visit shawnee-nsn.gov/survey-2025. If you prefer to take the survey over the phone, please contact us during business hours at (918) 542-2441, ext. 137.

P.S. - Eligible survey participants will be entered to win a \$50 Wal-Mart gift card!



MAGGIE BOYETT
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER



PRINCELLA PARKER REDCORN
COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

KIWIITAMAAKONAAKI HOKIMAAKI

MESSAGES FROM THE CHIEFS

CHIEF BEN BARNES



hato ni'kaanaki (greetings, my friends)

Very soon, before our next newsletter arrives to your mailbox, the Golden Mesa Casino and Hotel will be open. This major investment in the Tribe's future guarantees prosperity for our grandchildren and their families. I couldn't be more excited about the potential growth and strength the expansion will provide for our government and our people.

These next several months will be exciting to see how fast our investment in the panhandle will be able to contribute to our growth and ability to assist Shawnee families. The Shawnee Tribe has \$70 million of investment from many parties that we will need to repay to our bank and others who saw the wisdom to invest with us for this bright future.

I will confess that when Chief Sparkman told us that he was attempting to obtain some property in western Oklahoma for our casino, I was a doubting Thomas. We were successful because of Chief Sparkman's leadership and friendship with vital, key parties like Governor Annotubby of the Chickasaw Nation and former Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin.

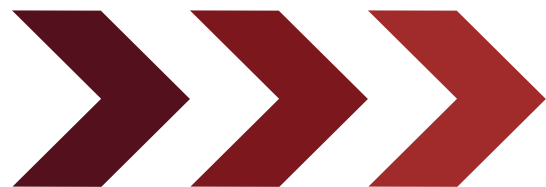
Almost immediately, we realized that we needed a larger facility as people were lining up on the weekend to come and enjoy themselves at our Golden Mesa Casino.

Part of our story that is perhaps not so widely known is that as early as January 2020, we began having conversations with our Chickasaw Nation partners about a casino expansion, only to be delayed by a global pandemic, which interrupted our operations for a time. Lending partners like to see twelve continuous months of income statements, balance sheets, and other financial documents so they can feel some surety in their ability to loan money. COVID interrupted that.

But now the day is almost here. And I am no longer that doubting Thomas. In fact, I suspect that in just a few short months we will realize we again need a bigger facility that will bring more revenue into the Tribe, but also create jobs and careers for Shawnee people and the citizens of Texas County.

If you are able, I invite you to come out to Guymon one day and enjoy the property the Tribe has built. Our best days are ahead of us.

Ben Barnes
Chief



THE SHAWNEE TRIBE BUSINESS COUNCIL



**SECRETARY
CAROLYN
FOSTER**



**TREASURER
MARK
McDOWELL**



**SEAT 1
JOHN
SPARKMAN**



**SEAT 2
DIANA
McLEAN**



SECOND CHIEF ROY BALDRIDGE

hato caakiwiyefa

I hope that everyone is doing well in these trying times. I would like to begin by thanking everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve our tribe for another four years. It has been an honor to serve our tribe since 2001, when I was appointed to a vacated seat, when Scott Secondine took a brief rest from the Business Committee, and later returned. During those years, service was voluntary with a stipend of \$10.00 a month being presented, followed by a raise to \$25.00 once our office was moved to Miami. I remember that many council members often signed and returned those checks to the tribe. Meals at General Council were often prepared by volunteers.

Over the years, we have gone from the Loyal Shawnee Building to the Big Cabin School Building to Miami, OK, where we now have seven buildings that house programs today and in the future. After leaving the Cherokee Nation, all our tribe had was a language grant (Shawnee Language) that the Cherokee Nation had acquired and allowed us to keep. After moving to Miami, we were able to obtain aid such as Aid to Tribal Government assistance and CCDF. Today, we have many programs covering behavioral and mental health, burial assistance, childcare assistance, domestic violence, elder assistance reimbursement, education assistance, school clothing assistance, housing and utility assistance, Indian child welfare, vehicle tags, and workforce reimbursement. Many of these programs are tribally funded, not federally funded. Our tribe now has a tribal court in Miami and Guymon, OK.

Over the last several years, we have explored ways to recover property in our former homelands. At this moment, our tribe is limited because we lack a land base, unlike many other tribes around us. When we separated from the Cherokee Nation, we did so with the agreement that we would go without any land. The act that separated us from the Cherokee Nation further stipulated that we could not place land into trust in Oklahoma on land occupied by another tribe unless that tribe gave us permission.



**SEAT 3
DREW
DIXON**



**SEAT 4
COREY
WINESBURG**



**SEAT 5
MONTY
COOMBES**



**SEAT 6
LEE
BLUEJACKET**



**SEAT 7
KENI
HOOD**

We were left with two choices: Oklahoma County or the Panhandle of Oklahoma.

The trust land for gaming in Texas County was accomplished by Chief Ron Sparkman with assistance from the Chickasaw Nation and Governor Mary Fallin. The truth is that Guymon was the only place our tribe could go to in the state of Oklahoma. Some might remember that we tried twice to go to Oklahoma City.

As I have mentioned in the past, in addition to Golden Mesa Casino, we also have Shawnee Development, which has recently expanded. We still have a way to go, but there are things we can do today in the form of helping each other. We can find the time and place to visit with each other with the intent of finding that connection that makes us all Shawnee. We can also build each other up, supporting those who are engaged in business. Hopefully, in the future, we can advertise Shawnee-owned businesses in one format or another. I am going to start providing information on current Shawnee businesses with each newsletter. This month, I would like to promote Blazin B's BBQ and Catering, owned by Drew and Sara Chamberlain. You can find them at the Atwoods parking lot in Vinita, OK, on Wednesdays and in Miami, OK, on Thursdays. For more information, you can Google or find it on Facebook.

niyaawe,

Roy D. Baldrige
Second Chief



NEW COMMUNITY RECYCLING TRAILER

THE SHAWNEE TRIBE ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT IS THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT ITS 10-BIN RECYCLING TRAILER IS OFFICIALLY READY FOR USE TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY TAKE A BIG STEP TOWARD A CLEANER, GREENER FUTURE!

THE RECYCLING TRAILER WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ALL TRIBAL CITIZENS, EMPLOYEES, AND MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY TO DROP OFF RECYCLABLES.

SIMPLY PLACE YOUR ITEMS INSIDE THE TRAILER PARKED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDING AT 108 S. EIGHT TRIBES TRAIL, MIAMI, OK

THE TRAILER HAS BINS FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

- ALUMINUM CANS
- GLASS BOTTLES
- PAPER
- TIN CANS
- CARDBOARD



JOIN US!

LUNCH & LEARN MONDAYS

Noon – 1:00 PM CDT
Free Zoom Meeting Series



Scan QR Code for more info and meeting link, or visit shawnee-nsn.gov

Mar. 17 What is Therapy?

Mar. 31 Building a Relationship with Your Child

April 14 Managing Stress

April 28 Navigating Relationship Challenges

May 12 Dealing with Anxiety & Depression

June 2 Cultivating Mindfulness & Presence

June 16 Exploring Identity & Self-Discovery

June 30 Managing Anger & Frustration

July 14 Setting & Achieving Goals

July 28 Understanding & Managing Fear

Aug. 11 Improving Communication Skills

Aug. 25 Managing Symptoms of Trauma

ABOUT :

This Lunch & Learn Meeting series aims to create a supportive and engaging Zoom community that allows survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence to learn about mental health, psychology, and personal growth through psychoeducation.

No cost to join, and no registration necessary.

HOSTED BY :

Meetings hosted by Shawnee Tribe Behavioral Health and facilitated by Haylee Fields, MS, LPC-C. Please direct any questions or concerns to Haylee via email or phone:

hfields@shawnee-tribe.com

(918) 542-2441, ext. 145



This publication and meeting series have been supported by Grant No. 15JOVW-23-GG-01617-TRIB awarded by the Office on Violence Against Women, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions and recommendations expressed in this series are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Department of Justice.

INTRODUCING SHAWNEE GLOBAL



Shawnee Development LLC, the enterprise division of the Shawnee Tribe, is proud to announce the formation of Shawnee Global LLC, a tribally owned holding company designed to lead the tribe's entry into the federal contracting space through the Small Business Administration's 8(a) Program. Shawnee Global will operate alongside Shawnee Development, further diversifying the tribe's economic portfolio and expanding business opportunities beyond traditional markets.

Chris Floyd, president of the Shawnee Development Board of Managers, stated, "Shawnee Global will serve as a catalyst for new economic growth and continued expansion. Our focus is on building sustainable enterprises that bring lasting value to the Shawnee Tribe and its citizens."

The board has named Tyler Levier (Citizen Potawatomi) as Shawnee Global's inaugural president and CEO. Levier joins the organization with over a decade of experience conducting business in Indian Country. Most recently, he served as the chief operating officer of Prairie Band LLC, the economic development entity of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, where he played a pivotal role in driving business growth and diversification.

Shawnee Chief Ben Barnes said, "The business council and I are very pleased to have Tyler leading this new era of economic development for our people. This initiative aligns with our commitment to creating long-term growth and self-sufficiency to benefit both present and future generations."

Levier remarked, "Shawnee Global will be an organization that thrives on values, integrity, and resilience. I am honored to take on this leadership role and work alongside the tribe in a way that creates real impact by taking on new challenges and driving meaningful growth."



TYLER LEVIER
(CITIZEN POTAWATOMI),
INAUGURAL PRESIDENT &
CEO OF SHAWNEE GLOBAL LLC



AND GOLDEN MESA HOTEL & CASINO EXPANSION



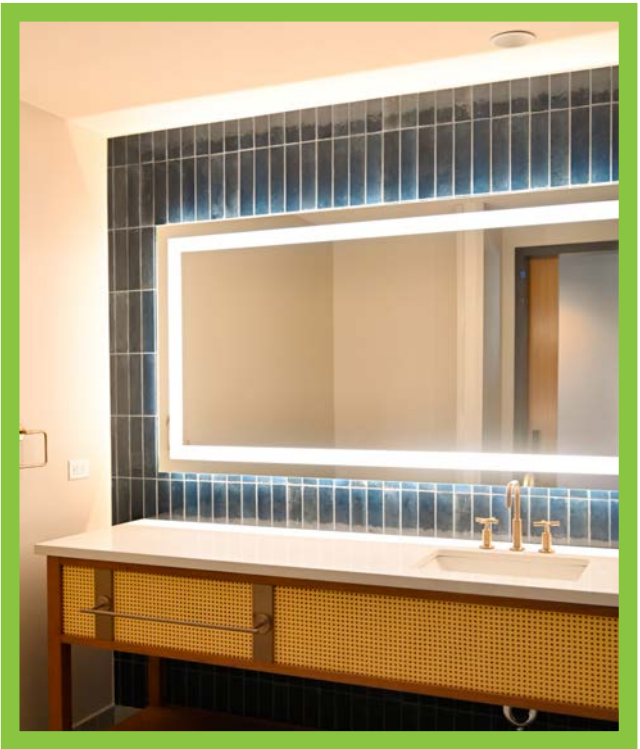
Golden Mesa's expanded gaming floor, new dining & beverage options and high-end 100-guest room hotel will open to the public later this month! Join tribal leaders and gaming commission staff in Guymon to celebrate the grand opening on Friday, August 22—a ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held at 11:00 AM. Below are some sneak peeks at the new interiors and eastern elevation of the casino.



Eastern elevation of the expanded casino and new water tower in the background.



Lighting installation at the Cimarron Ridge Bar.



Full tile backsplash in new guest room vanities.

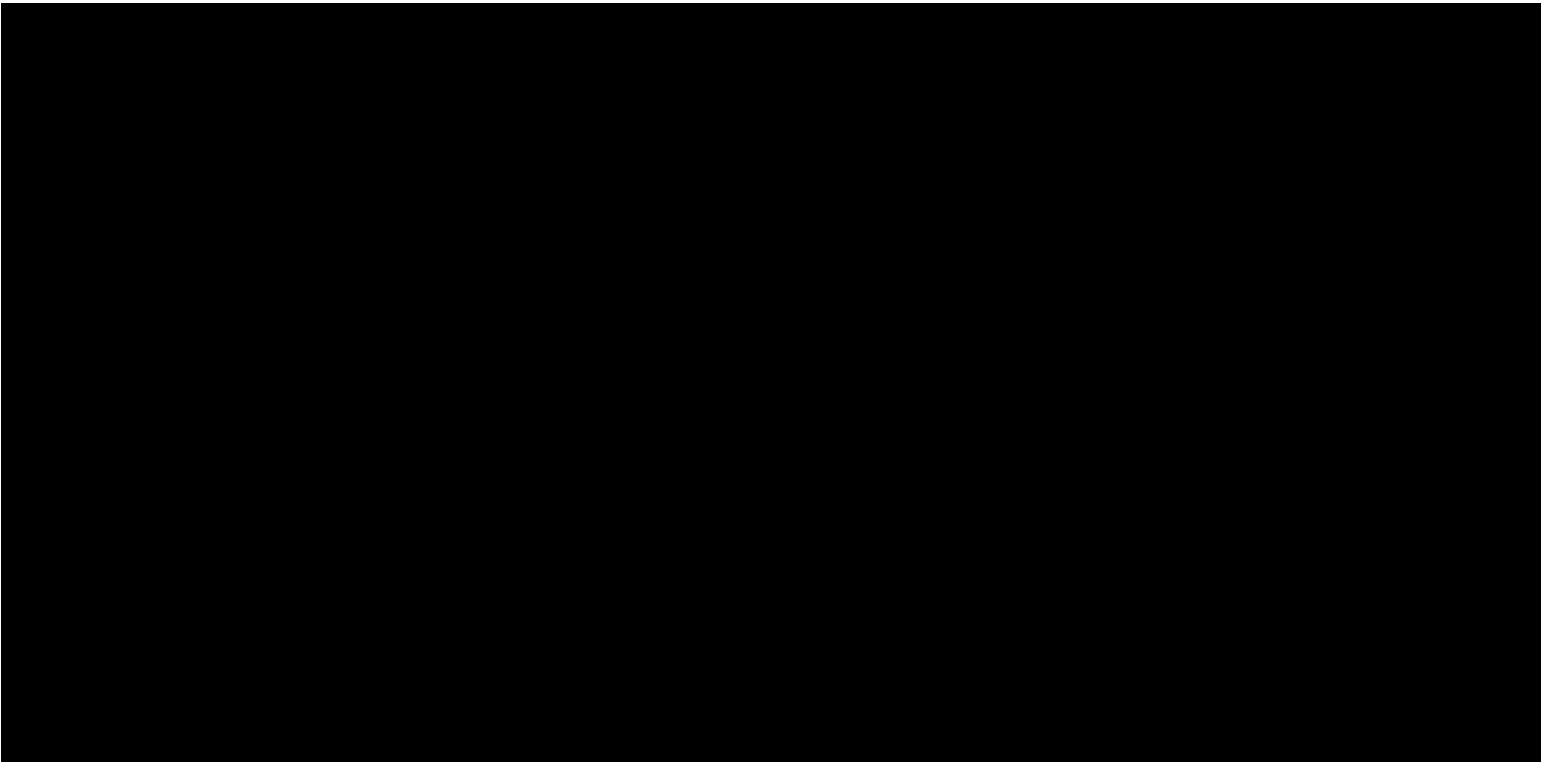
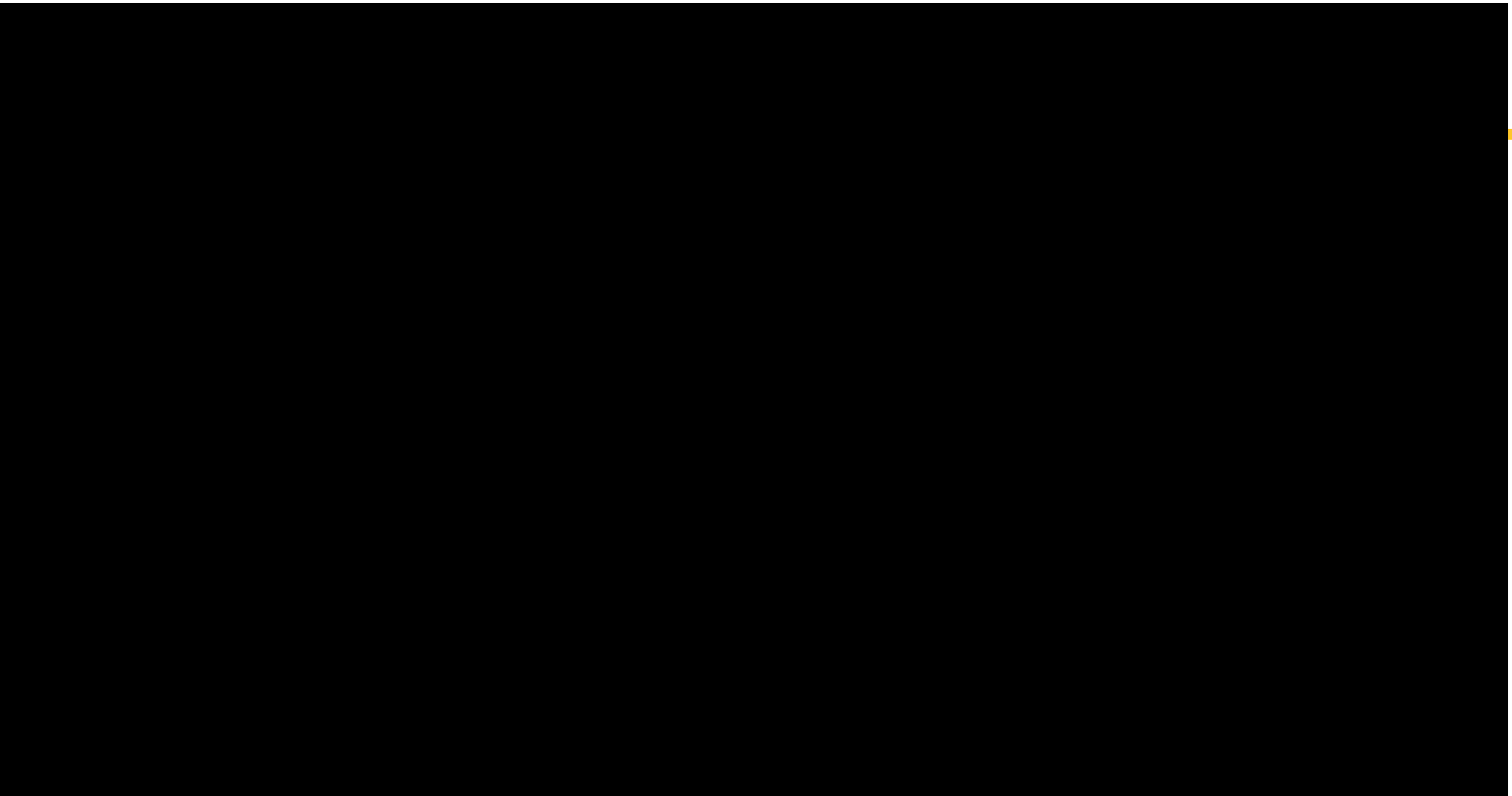
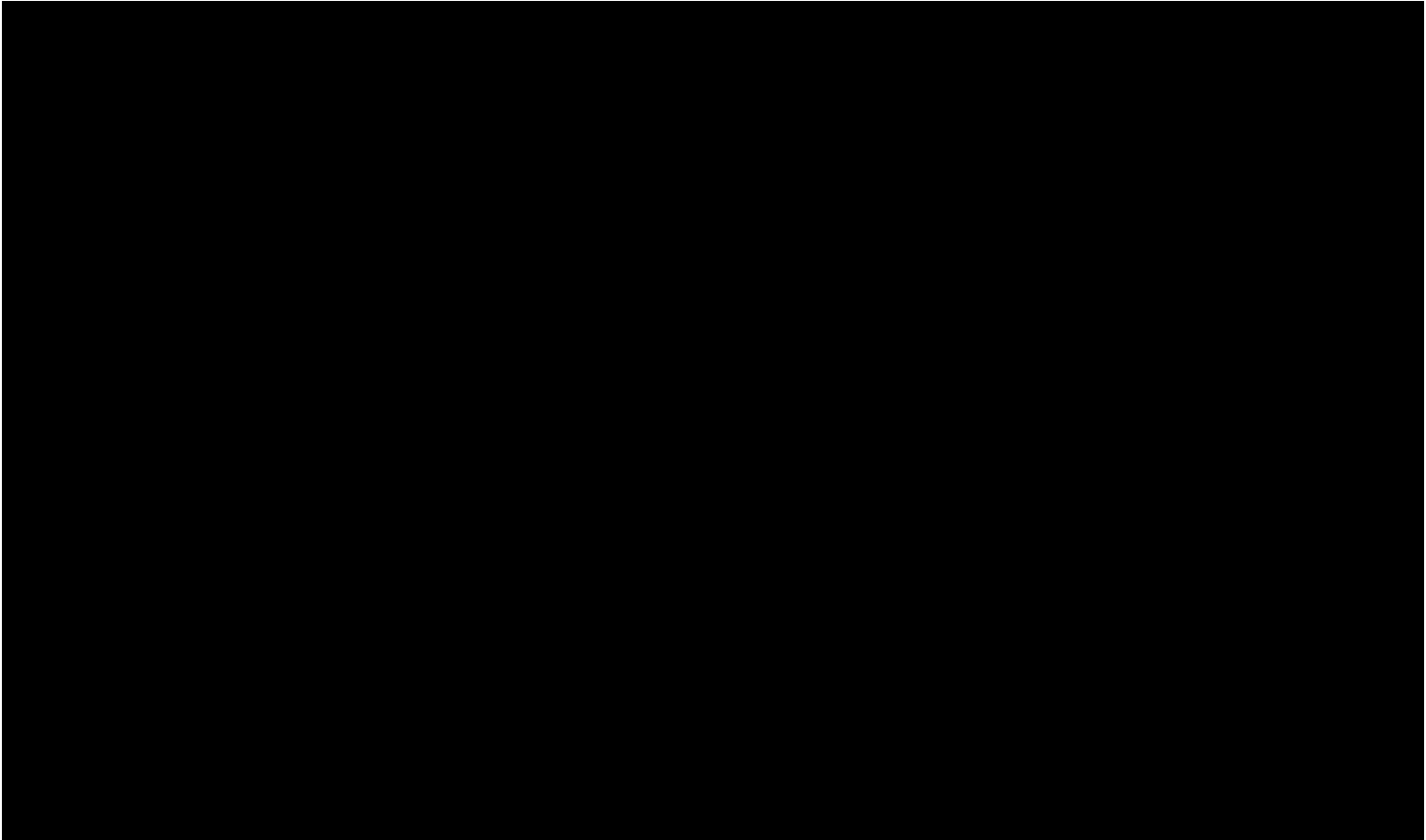
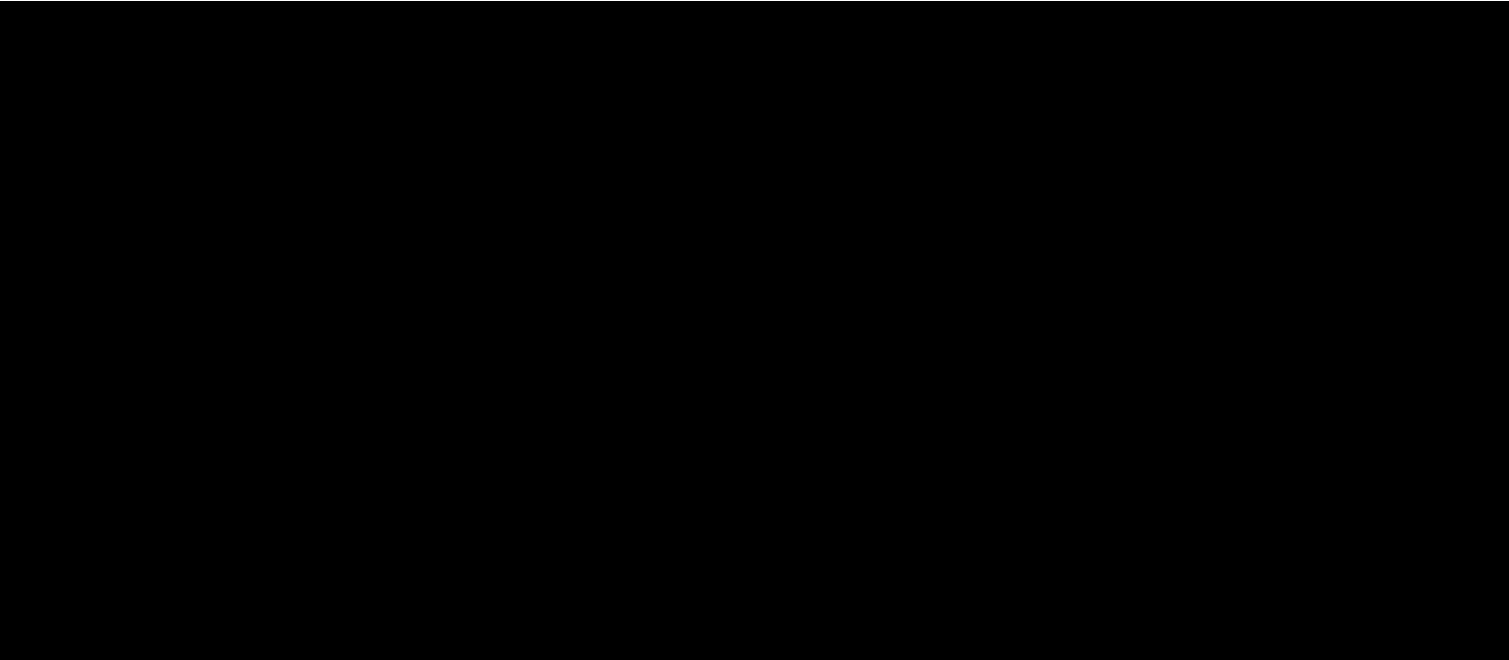


Floor-to-ceiling glass at the entrance to the Cimarron Ridge Restaurant.

TA'SAAWANWAATOWEEYAKWE

THE LANGUAGE CORNER / "WHERE WE SPEAK SHAWNEE"

From June 18-21, Shawnee Language Immersion Program apprentices, mentors, Community Language Preservationists (CLPs), and other guests gathered for their annual conference at the Emma “Mock” Donaldson Shawnee Language House. Many of the attendees live far away from Miami, OK, and this was a rare opportunity to visit and speak Shawnee with each other in person.



WEEMEYAKWE: AT THE MOUTH OF THE SCIOTO RIVER

by A. Gwynn Henderson and David Pollack

The original mouth of the Scioto River, in what is now southern Ohio, is far from Oklahoma. So far, perhaps, it has been forgotten. But important events in Shawnee history—in the mid-1700s and thousands of years earlier—took place there.

Two painted panels on Portsmouth, Ohio’s floodwall highlight its importance. One shows the many geometric earthworks and mounds that once spanned the Ohio River there, but that is a story for another time. The other mural (pg. 14) illustrates the most important, and largest, Shawnee town of the mid-eighteenth century.

In 1751, Chillicothe stood on both sides of the Ohio River at the mouth of the Scioto. It is more widely known by its English name, the lower Shawnee Town. It was home to the Shawnee people and their tribal allies, a diplomatic center, and a trading hub. No traces of the town are visible today, but archaeological evidence in Kentucky testifies to its presence. Once you know its history, this place comes alive. It is not hard to imagine a bustling village of over 1,200 people deep in Indian Country.



Photo courtesy Portsmouth Murals Inc. The Portsmouth Group of mounds and earthworks, looking eastward across the Ohio River floodplain as the sun rises over the Kentucky river bluffs. People of the Hopewell period built these structures for religious, celestial, and communal reasons, beginning sometime around 0-200 CE. Mid-nineteenth-century maps of the Portsmouth Group and Serpent Mound—interspersed with drawings of Native-made pipes, a footed ceramic jar, and a mica hand cut-out—form the border of this mural by Robert Dafford (b. 1951).



This section of John Mitchell’s 1755 map shows both parts of the lower Shawnee Town along the Ohio River: “Shawnoah” on the north side; “Low. Town” on the south side. A north-south trail extends through the town, connecting the community to Native settlements north on the Scioto River. Two different symbols – a mound with or without a flag – reflect the differences in size and function of the town’s two parts. At that time, the community’s council house stood in the northern part, as did English trading houses. Right: A postcard, circa 1907-1914, shows the meeting of the Scioto and Ohio Rivers, the former site of the town.

A REVITALIZED SHAWNEE CENTER

Shawnee people had left the middle Ohio Valley in the late 1600s. They were reeling from the devastating impacts of the smallpox pandemic and fearful of Haudenosaunee raids. In the 1730s, they returned to the river valley of their ancestors. Rich in natural resources, it was a good place to return to. There was fertile soil, mixed hardwood forests, flat grassy plains, and cane breaks. Clear streams and freshwater and salt springs were everywhere.

Descendants of Shawnee groups who had settled on the Susquehanna and Delaware rivers established the lower Shawnee Town. Their relatives had occupied the spot just 200 years earlier. Most had lived among other Native peoples. All had experienced the impacts of Europeans on their way of life.

In the 1740s and 1750s, other Shawnees joined the settlement. By then, members of most, if not all, of the five Shawnee divisions lived in the town. Other tribal people also called the lower Shawnee Town home. They included Seneca, Delaware, and missionized Indians from near Montreal.

A TRADING CENTER

The town was perfectly situated to be a major English trading center. Water routes and overland trails, including the Warriors Path, extended through the settlement. Residents, as well as Native people from surrounding towns, brought furs and deerskins to the town’s trading houses. In exchange, they received items like linen, ribbons, and stockings. Durable goods included guns and gunflints, copper kettles, knives, and glass beads. Archaeologists have recovered fragments of these objects in [trash pits](#).

VILLAGE LIFE

Daily life within the community probably followed the rhythms of centuries past. Women tended fields of corn, beans, squash, tobacco, and sunflowers. They collected wild plants like hickory nuts, grapes, and sumac for food or medicine. Men hunted mainly deer, bear, elk, and turkey using bows and arrows as well as the guns they had received in trade.

A LARGE COMMUNITY

In 1751, the lower Shawnee Town was at least twice as large as earlier Shawnee villages and bigger than most Indian settlements in the region at that time. But despite the presence of many tribal groups, the town’s location was distinctly Shawnee.

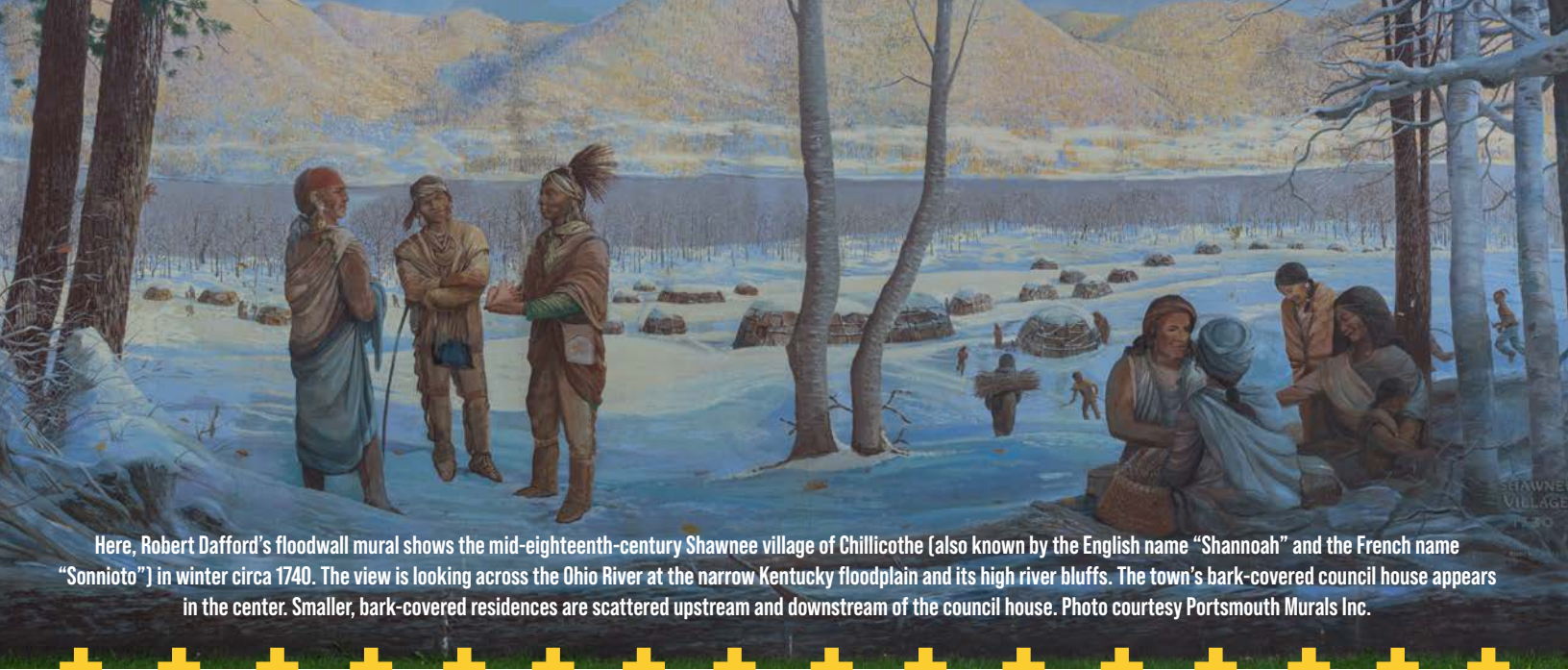
One hundred houses were scattered across the floodplain on the north side of the Ohio River. Forty houses stood on the narrow floodplain and higher terraces south of it. These houses were built of a wooden pole framework, covered with either bark, mats, or skins. They measured 30 feet by 60 feet and had rounded corners.

Extended families lived in each house. From the archaeological record, we know some families used small river pebbles to chink poles firmly in place. [Smudge pits](#), cemeteries, and trash pits were near the houses. As was common for the time, some families built their houses of squared logs covered with bark or clapboard. A few even had chimneys.

WHAT ARE “TRASH PITS” AND “SMUDGE PITS”? ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Pits. Pits. Pits. Families often dug deep pits next to their houses into which they threw ash from their hearths, food remains, and everyday trash. This included fragments of broken jars and tools, and animal bones. To help control bothersome insects, residents filled small shallow holes with combustible material—often dried-up, shelled corn cobs. Setting the cobs on fire produced thick smoke.

Want to see more of the 1755 map on pg. 12?
Scan here to view it on the Library of Congress’s website.



Here, Robert Dafford's floodwall mural shows the mid-eighteenth-century Shawnee village of Chillicothe (also known by the English name "Shannoah" and the French name "Sonnioto") in winter circa 1740. The view is looking across the Ohio River at the narrow Kentucky floodplain and its high river bluffs. The town's bark-covered council house appears in the center. Smaller, bark-covered residences are scattered upstream and downstream of the council house. Photo courtesy Portsmouth Murals Inc.

In the early 1750s, the lower Shawnee Town was the center of Shawnee tribal politics. It was the home of Shawnee leaders Misemeathaquatha (Big Hominy) and Newcommer. At times, other notable Shawnee leaders, like Tomenibuck and Lawachcamicky, also may have stayed there. These men would have hosted town-wide meetings in the 90-foot-long rectangular council house. The settlement was an international diplomatic center, too. Members of the Cherokee, Miami, and Delaware nations came to town to meet with the Shawnee. Europeans on mid-level diplomatic missions from the colonies also visited the town.

With the outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1754, the lower Shawnee Town's location became a handicap, exposing residents to the risk of English attacks. So, sometime between April and November 1758, the Shawnee people moved their village northward. In the 1760s, Native people and English diplomats sometimes met at the old town's location. Traces of it were still visible on the Kentucky side of the Ohio in 1773. In the late 1930s, archaeologists rediscovered the lower Shawnee Town as part of the Works Progress Administration's sprawling archaeology program.

To learn even more online, visit Discover Kentucky Archaeology at archaeology.ky.gov, or scan this code to go straight to the page on Lower Shawnee Town.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

A. Gwynn Henderson (Education Director) and David Pollack (Director) work for the Kentucky Archaeological Survey, Department of Society, Culture, Crime & Justice Studies at Western Kentucky University. They received their PhDs in Anthropology from the University of Kentucky in 1998. Their involvement in Fort Ancient/ Shawnee archaeological research began in the early 1980s, when they analyzed and reported on archaeological materials recovered from the lower Shawnee Town. One of their ongoing research projects focuses on the lifeways of ancient Native farming cultures of the middle Ohio Valley.



SHAWNEE VIP PREVIEW AT FAMILY DISCOVERY CENTER

The brand-new FAMily Discovery Center at the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City will open later this summer, thanks in part to support from the Shawnee Tribe. Tribal citizens are invited to attend an exclusive VIP Preview event before the center opens to the public. The center will offer a unique, fun-filled learning experience for everyone ages three to 103. Join Grandma Turtle in her immersive pop-up book world where "We are all Connected" to play games, build resilience, and discover the importance of stewardship and caring for our world. **Please RSVP by September 1.**

FAMily Discovery Center



"Don't cry wolf, I'm coyote"

Scan here to RSVP online or email events@shawnee-tribe.com for assistance.



SAVE THE DATE

VIP PREVIEW
Sunday
September 14, 2025
12-3pm

Come dressed to explore, climb, and have a good time.

Please RSVP by September 1.

FAM
First Americans Museum
659 First Americans Blvd.
OKC, OK 73129

TRIBAL ELECTIONS & GENERAL COUNCIL WEEKEND

General Council weekend will kick off the evening of Friday, September 19, with a community dinner & stomp dance in Miami. The annual meeting of the Tribal Council and 2025 Business Council election will be held on Saturday, September 20, at the Craig County Fairgrounds in Vinita. Door prize entries, catered lunch and refreshments will be provided for annual meeting attendees.

VOTING DEADLINES & SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2 | 5:00PM | DEADLINE TO REQUEST AN ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLY ONLINE AT SHAWNEE-NSN.GOV/ELECTIONS |
| THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | 5:00PM | DEADLINE TO RETURN AN ABSENTEE BALLOT |
| FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 19 | 2:00 – 7:00PM | POLLS OPEN (EARLY IN-PERSON VOTING) CRAIG COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS & COMMUNITY CENTER VINITA, OK |
| | 7:00PM | COMMUNITY DINNER & STOMP DANCE MIAMI TRIBE COUNCIL HOUSE MIAMI, OK |
| SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20 | 8:00AM | POLLS OPEN (ELECTION DAY) CRAIG COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS & COMMUNITY CENTER VINITA, OK |
| | 11:00AM | ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL CRAIG COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS & COMMUNITY CENTER VINITA, OK |



MEET THE CANDIDATES 2025

CANDIDATES FOR BUSINESS COUNCIL SEAT 6

- Sonya Baldrige Spires
 - Marty Coombes
- Jana Edwards-Johnson
 - Melinda Kimball
 - Malachi Sears

UNOPPOSED CANDIDATES

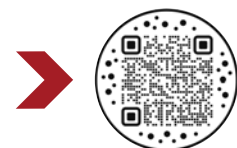


Roy Baldrige, Second Chief (I)



Monty Coombes, Seat 5 (I)

To request an absentee ballot or get more information about tribal elections, visit shawnee-nsn.gov/elections or scan here with your phone:



CANDIDATES FOR BUSINESS COUNCIL SEAT 6



SONYA BALDRIDGE SPIRES +++

HOMETOWN: VINITA, OKLAHOMA
CURRENT CITY: TULSA, OK
OCCUPATION: LEGAL ASSISTANT

I was born and raised in Vinita, OK. I graduated from Vinita High School in 1985. I attended Missouri Valley College in Marshall, MO. I moved to Houston, TX in 1989 and resided there until last year. I am currently working remotely for a law firm out of Refugio, Texas. I have been employed with my current employer since 1996 and have been his Legal Assistant since 2006. My duties also include Office Manager/HR. I am the mother of one and grandmother to two beautiful grandchildren.

If a citizen has further questions for you, what is the best way for them to contact you?

sonya-spires@sbcglobal.net

In 1-2 sentences, please explain your reason(s) for seeking election.

To contribute in any way that I can to help our tribal business council succeed in their mission for the Shawnee people.

To help uphold the continuation and growth of the Shawnee people along with our traditional values.

If elected, what personal qualities will you bring to the Business Council?

I have the distinct ability to bring people together. I am compassionate and always willing to lend a helping hand. I am a problem solver and a believer in transparency and collaboration.

If elected, what issues affecting Shawnee citizens do you intend to prioritize the most?

To help ensure the growth of all tribal citizens so that they will have the opportunity to thrive.

Which in turn will help secure a better future for generations to come.

Ex. Continuing to build on the programs that are already in place.



MARTY COOMBES



HOMETOWN: VINITA, OKLAHOMA
CURRENT CITY: VINITA, OKLAHOMA
OCCUPATION: RETIRED FROM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

I'm 66 years old. I retired from the public school system. My fiancée Shawna and I have been together for 10 years. I help take care of my mother Roberta Coombes. My past time is BBQ and smoking meat. I have 3 smokers and hope to enter a few Smoking competitions next season. I also enjoy fishing, playing golf and growing vegetables in my garden.

In 1-2 sentences, please explain your reason(s) for seeking election.

I'm seeking election to be involved more in the tribe. Looking to help with issues involving our children and elders. Also to help with issues affecting the tribe.

If elected, what personal qualities will you bring to the Business Council?

I understand how to understand budgets and cost control from a business aspect. I ran my own landscape business and help control cost and maintenance on athletic fields and building expense.

If elected, what issues affecting Shawnee citizens do you intend to prioritize the most?

Issues affecting the elders and children of the tribe. Also issues that affect all members of the tribe as a whole.

If a citizen has further questions for you, what is the best way for them to contact you?

martycoombes@gmail.com



JANA EDWARDS-JOHNSON



HOMETOWN: MIAMI, OKLAHOMA
CURRENT CITY: MIAMI, OKLAHOMA
OCCUPATION: DIRECTOR OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Hato (Hello),

As a child, my mother, sister, and I would go with my grandparents, Gilbert and Cornelia Sparkman, to White Oak for various functions. Whether for a social gathering or a business council meeting. Any time we were there, the buzz of conversations, laughter, and delicious food made it feel like a family reunion.

Grandpa gave us a love for gardening and fishing on Hudson Creek. My grandmother taught us to hunt for wild onions and morel mushrooms. Having the privilege of growing up on their farm, as we lovingly called it, taught me to respect our land and the food it provided.

Those experiences have enabled me, as the Director of Health and Social Services, Vital Statistics, and Tribal Tags for the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, to provide vital services that support the well-being of the tribal community with compassion and respect.

In 1-2 sentences, please explain your reason(s) for seeking election.

To ensure that all citizens are well-informed and receive clear, accurate, and transparent information.

If elected, what personal qualities will you bring to the Business Council?

My experiences in special education have helped me foster an understanding of the diverse needs of people. Committed to being a voice of integrity for all Shawnee citizens. I will utilize my skills and current professional experiences in policy development, advocacy, leadership, and mediation to support the tribe's continued success.

If elected, what issues affecting Shawnee citizens do you intend to prioritize the most?

Enhance tribal program development, with a focus on health, education, welfare, and food security. Develop new businesses, support citizen-owned companies, foster innovative enterprises, and continue to develop our historical tribal database by collecting oral and written histories from the Elders and their families.

If a citizen has further questions for you, what is the best way for them to contact you?

I look forward to visiting with you. You can reach me at 918-605-9711 or johnsonje226@gmail.com.

Niyaawe (Thank you),
Jana, Holly-Ma-Peashe





MELINDA KIMBALL + + + + +

HOMETOWN: LENAPAH, OKLAHOMA
CURRENT CITY: LENAPAH, OKLAHOMA
OCCUPATION: TRANSPORTATION CHEROKEE NATION WRHC

I am proud to be a citizen of the Shawnee Tribe and a member of the Raccoon Clan. I had the great honor of receiving my name from Victoria Dottery, and I carry forward the legacy of my great-grandmother, Martha A. Long Shufelt Story, on my father's side. On my mother's side, I am also Cherokee.

I am married and blessed with five children and three bonus children. I currently serve the Cherokee Nation as a van driver at the Nowata Will Rogers Health Center, ensuring our citizens get to their appointments safely and on time. My career background includes three years as a mobile security officer at a local refinery and 18 years at Walmart, where I served ten of those years as a department manager.

I never imagined running for council in our Shawnee Tribe—but here I am, ready to serve.

In 1-2 sentences, please explain your reason(s) for seeking election.

I am excited for our tribe, and I want to be part of the leadership to that make good decisions for all of us that keeps our tribe moving forward and being its best!

If elected, what personal qualities will you bring to the Business Council?

My greatest strength is listening with compassion and working hard for others. I want to be a strong, hands-on steward for our people and help shape the future of our tribe by identifying our needs through collaboration with fellow citizens.

If elected, what issues affecting Shawnee citizens do you intend to prioritize the most?

We have come a long way—from Indian tacos and bingo games—to building a more empowered future. I believe we are on the path to reclaiming what was once ours, and I am excited to be a part of that journey.

If elected, I commit to:

1. Being accessible, dependable, and engaged in tribal events and decisions.
2. Honoring our elders—ensuring their voices are heard and their needs are met.
3. Advocating for alcohol and narcotic prevention and recovery programs for all ages.
4. Supporting children's mental health initiatives—because they are our future, our next generation, our next council.

Please consider giving me your vote. It would be an honor to serve you and help carry our Shawnee Nation forward.

If a citizen has further questions for you, what is the best way for them to contact you?

melindakimball854@gmail.com



MALACHI SEARS + + + + +

HOMETOWN: WELCH, OKLAHOMA
CURRENT CITY: MIAMI, OKLAHOMA
OCCUPATION: SELF-EMPLOYED

Hato, caaki wiyeefa (Hello, everyone)

My name is Malachi Sears, and I am currently seeking election for seat 6 of the Shawnee Tribe Business Council. I am the son of Mike and Jeannie Sears, grandson of Lowell and Sue Sears, and great grandson of Eben and Elvina Brown. I am a 2010 graduate of Welch High School and received my associate's degree from NEO A&M College in Miami, OK in 2012. For the last 8 years, I served as Operations Manager at a national broadline food distribution company stationed in Vinita, OK. I am a lifelong resident of Northeastern Oklahoma, and my family and I have been participating members of our Shawnee Tribe ceremonial grounds in White Oak, OK for generations. I enjoy attending our tribal functions and teaching our Shawnee language classes. I take great pride in serving our tribe and our community with gratitude and dedication.

In 1-2 sentences, please explain your reason(s) for seeking election.

I am seeking election to the Business Council because I am deeply committed to supporting the growth, sustainability, and prosperity of our tribe and all of its citizens.

If elected, what personal qualities will you bring to the Business Council?

If elected, I will continue to work diligently for the Shawnee Tribe and all of its citizens. As a candidate for the Business Council, I bring a track record of honesty, leadership, a strong work ethic, a commitment to service, and effective management skills. I lead by example, fostering collaboration and making informed decisions that drive progress. I am passionate about serving others, whether it's supporting fellow tribal members or advancing the broader mission of the Shawnee Tribe as a whole. Preserving our language, culture, history, ceremonies, and serving our people to the best of my abilities is of the utmost importance to

me. With more than a decade of business and management experience and being a lifelong member and advocate of our tribe, community, and ceremonial grounds, I hope to continue serving our people as a member of our Shawnee Tribe Business Council. My goal is to work collaboratively, ensure that every voice is heard, and advocate for policies that benefit our people both now and for generations to come.

If elected, what issues affecting Shawnee citizens do you intend to prioritize the most?

I am a strong advocate of supporting the citizens of our tribe and preserving our culture and traditions. We must take care of our elders as they have spent their lives taking care of us. We must also ensure that the basic needs of all Shawnee citizens are being heard and met. I intend to focus on creating opportunities for our elders, families, and children to all thrive both personally and professionally. I will advocate strongly for policies and programs emphasizing housing assistance, access to healthcare, quality education, and career opportunities for all tribal citizens and their families. I intend to make sound, informed decisions that ensure the prosperity and sustainability of our Tribe and improve the quality of life for all Shawnee tribal members. Secondly, I believe cultural preservation is a priority that must be taken seriously. Our language, culture, history and ceremonies are a vital part of who we are, where we come from, and where we are going. We must honor and respect our past as we look towards our bright future.

If a citizen has further questions for you, what is the best way for them to contact you?

The best way to reach me is via email at malachisears@gmail.com

Niyaawe! (Thank you!)

Elder Assistance Reimbursement Program



SCAN FOR MORE

- ◆ FY25 applications will be accepted until September 30 postmark date
- ◆ EARP is available to citizens aged 65+
- ◆ Reimbursable expenses include but are not limited to medical & hygienic supplies, utilities, taxes, insurance, groceries or home maintenance



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program



SCAN FOR MORE

Shawnee Tribe LIHEAP funds for home air and heat are still available for

Oklahoma residents who meet the income guidelines set forth by the US Department of Health and Human Services (see table below).

| HOUSEHOLD SIZE | 1-PERSON | 2-PERSON | 3-PERSON | 4-PERSON | 5-PERSON | 6-PERSON |
|----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| MAX. INCOME | \$25,927 | \$33,905 | \$41,883 | \$49,861 | \$57,838 | \$65,816 |

If your household is larger than 6 people, please contact program staff for assistance.

Higher Education Awards



SCAN FOR MORE

- ◆ The deadline for Fall Term 2025 is **Monday, September 1**, for college & university applicants
- ◆ Vo-Tech applications are accepted on a rolling basis—students should apply for an award during their school's enrollment period



School Clothing & Extracurricular Activities Reimbursement Program



- ◆ Annual Deadline: September 1
- ◆ Up to \$800 in annual assistance for school clothing & shoes
- ◆ Up to \$400 for expenses related to extracurricular activities



SCAN FOR MORE



Note: Due to the increased volume of applications in the Social Services and Higher Education programs, please allow 4-6 weeks from submission of completed application to receipt of payment. While there are some emergency assistance program services that allow for a quicker turnaround, these are exceptions and should not be considered as the standard processing time.

HASENOOKI IN MEMORIAM

- DAVID ANTHONY HART
- ROBERTA LYNN (MILLARD) PIERCE
- GERALD LEE POLSON, JR.
- KENNETH HOWARD ROBERTS
- ARRON CHRISTIAN SPAULING

Please note: Surviving family members of the deceased have reported the names listed here to the Citizen Enrollment Department. For assistance or to notify the tribe of a citizen's passing, visit shawnee-nsn.gov/enrollment or contact enrollment@shawnee-tribe.com.

SHAWNEE TRIBE BURIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Tribal citizens are eligible for up to \$5,000 in assistance covering funeral and burial costs after all other financial and insurance funding has been depleted. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 180 calendar days from the date of death. Visit shawnee-nsn.gov/burial for more information, or contact Program Specialist Tammy Burkybile at (918) 542-2441, ext. 106, for assistance.

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THE SHAWNEE JOURNAL

2025



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