



# Notes from the Chief

*What I'm working on for You*



Osiyo -

The Cherokee Nation recently acquired more than 60 acres of land in Delaware County. The site is one of the historic endpoints of the Trail of Tears, which is especially significant in 2018 as we commemorate the 180th anniversary of the forced removal of the Cherokee people to Indian Territory, now modern-day Oklahoma. The tract is adjacent to the grounds of the former Oaks Indian Mission, a mission that served multiple generations of Cherokees. The acreage, which also houses an historic Cherokee cemetery called God's Acre, is a significant part of our history. Now, it is part of our bright future as a tribal nation.

We believe in protecting sites that are historically significant, as well as preserving them for the betterment of our tribal citizens and the environment. I am deeply committed to safeguarding our traditions and protecting who we are as a people, a culture and a tribal government. We are stronger when we dedicate ourselves to the preservation of our heritage and teach future generations about the immense struggles the Cherokee people endured and, eventually, overcame. So today, we have an obligation to make these kinds of investments for our citizens.

Land is a legacy and an asset today, tomorrow and will continue to be for the next seven generations. Adding to the Cherokee land base is something I will remain committed to as Principal Chief. The entirety of this land was once ours, and it is a joy to return this piece of land to the Cherokee people. We will preserve, maintain and conserve the precious resources on this beautiful and historic site.

Oaks Mission is also an important place for the Cherokee Nation, as Moravian missionaries established missions among the Cherokee in the 1800s. After removal on the Trail of Tears, the mission was re-established in Oaks. The Moravian missionaries ultimately closed the mission, but it reopened as a Lutheran mission in 1902. Today, it serves as a residential school for many Native children.

The purchase ensured that a planned poultry operation, which would have added several large barns

and hundreds of thousands of chickens to the landscape, would not negatively impact this significant piece of Cherokee history. This purchase has also helped preserve the local watershed, as Oaks Mission serves as the headwaters of Spring Creek, one of the most pristine and beautiful creeks in the state. Increased awareness about preserving our natural resources has been one of the foundations of the Cherokee Nation's achievements in the past six years, and this focus on stewardship and land protection will benefit the local community and northeast Oklahoma for many generations.

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