



# Notes from the Chief

*What I'm working on for You*

Osiyo -

Cherokee Nation Entertainment remains the regional leader in entertainment and hospitality, and our efforts continue to evolve, expand and improve. Bigger and better options at our tribal casinos, including the tribe's flagship Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa, ensure Cherokee Nation is able to make investments in programs and services that improve the quality of life for our people. Success allows us to improve access to health care, homeownership rates and educational opportunities.

Recently, traditional forms of craps and roulette were launched at the Hard Rock, Cherokee Casino & Hotel West Siloam Springs and Cherokee Casino & Hotel Roland. We previously offered card-based versions of these games, and earlier this year, the Oklahoma legislature approved tribes offering the traditional versions of the games – using ball and dice. The governor signed that bill into law. We have historically been first in the market to deliver the latest games and technology, and this was no different.

This advancement is good for the state and good for the Cherokee Nation. It brings tribal gaming in Oklahoma in line with the other major commercial markets across the country. We know tribes are a huge economic force in Oklahoma, almost as big as the oil and gas industry, and one of the main tourism drivers regionally. Cherokee Nation, alone, has an economic impact of more than \$2 billion annually.

At Hard Rock, we also recently topped out the final beam on a 65,000-square-foot expansion. The space, which will offer more gaming and create 45 new jobs, will have a country and western theme. It will contain almost 7,000 square feet of new public event space that can be used for weddings or other special events. It replaces the tent-like structure that had been on the premises since 2002. The expansion more than triples the space. Within a few weeks, we will also host a ceremony marking the final beam being installed at the new Cherokee Casino Tahlequah.

When that new property is completed next year, we will be able to move all our language preservation programs into the current casino building after it has been modified to house offices and classrooms. All of our language programs and experts will then be under one roof.

In the early 1990's, the tribe, led by Principal Chief Wilma Mankiller, made the decision to enter the gaming market. Land in Catoosa was put into trust and Cherokee Nation's bingo hall was opened. I served as a Cherokee Nation Tribal Councilor and on the board of Cherokee Nation Bingo, the precursor to today's Cherokee Nation Businesses, when we took the next step and added electronic games during Principal Chief Joe Byrd's tenure.

With every step in the development process, our goal has always been to create jobs, and provide the essential government services the Cherokee people need and deserve.

Today, all of these expansions are positive news, and when I look back upon my time as Principal Chief, the impact that our businesses have on the Cherokee people is undeniable. We took \$100 million of our casino profits and invested it in health care to build and expand clinics and soon, in Tahlequah, we will open America's largest outpatient health center for Native people.

It is all possible because of our business success. As we grow, the Cherokee Nation and our neighbors throughout northeast Oklahoma, reap the benefits.

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