Investing in Our People
Building for the Next Seven Generations
2017 Report to the Cherokee People
Osiyo!

The Cherokee Nation invests in the lives of our people to ensure a brighter future for our tribe today, tomorrow and for generations to come. The Cherokee Nation is thriving like never before, and we are proud of that success. We are honored to work for the benefit of our people, ensuring Cherokee Nation's 14 counties remain an outstanding place to live, work and raise a family.

Last year included many historic milestones:

- We invested more than $13 million into infrastructure development within the tribe's 14-county jurisdiction. This investment not only benefits Cherokee Nation citizens, but all Oklahomans.
- We continued development of the new state-of-the-art health care facility at the W.W. Hastings campus in Tahlequah. The facility will be the largest Native health care facility in America and ensure better care for generations in northeast Oklahoma.
- We renovated the W.W. Keeler Complex for the first time since 1992, including adding a 31,500-square-foot second story, a new HVAC system, exterior updates and more. The new second floor will house more staff and the Cherokee Nation judicial branch.
- We invested a record amount of our vehicle tag revenue into public education. Tribal leaders distributed $4.7 million to 106 school districts in northeast Oklahoma, helping with teacher salaries, school supplies and more.
- We continued growing our language programs such as the Cherokee Language Master Apprentice Program, which is designed to develop new speakers and teachers of the Cherokee language.
- We also continued to defend Cherokee Nation's vast abundance of natural resources. Through the work of our first secretary of natural resources and focused conservation efforts, we are protecting the air, water and land within our tribal boundaries.

We are extremely proud of the positive things we have accomplished at the Cherokee Nation. As the financial data in this report reflects, we have been responsible stewards of the tribe's fiscal resources. As the largest tribal government in the United States, our operations are unparalleled in Oklahoma and across Indian Country. The employees of the Cherokee Nation deserve much thanks and praise for their dedication to ensure our programs and services continue to meet the needs of our citizens for now and the next seven generations. God bless the Cherokee Nation.

Wado,

Bill John Baker
Principal Chief

S. Joe Crittenden
Deputy Principal Chief
Executive Branch

The executive branch of the Cherokee Nation is charged with executing the laws of the Cherokee Nation, establishing of tribal policy and delegating of authority as necessary for day-to-day operations of all programs and enterprises administered by the Cherokee Nation tribal government. These leaders include the Principal Chief, Deputy Principal Chief and six cabinet positions appointed by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the Tribal Council.

Legislative Branch

The legislative branch consists of a 17-member Tribal Council. The council is elected by popular vote to four-year terms. There are 15 councilors elected to represent the districts within the Cherokee Nation jurisdictional boundaries and two councilors elected to represent those citizens who live outside the boundaries. The Tribal Council establishes laws necessary and proper for the good of the Cherokee Nation, and conducts other business to further the interests of the Cherokee Nation and its citizens. A speaker elected by other council members presides over the council.

Judicial Branch

The judicial branch includes the Cherokee Nation Supreme Court, which primarily hears appeals from district courts and the Cherokee Nation’s boards and commissions. The Supreme Court consists of five justices who are Cherokee Nation citizens, licensed attorneys and nominated by the Principal Chief and confirmed by the Tribal Council. The justices serve staggered 10-year terms. The district courts serve citizens by providing a forum for general jurisdiction over disputes arising under the laws and constitution of Cherokee Nation. District court judges are selected in the same manner as the justices and serve four-year terms.
A carved maple statue entitled “Perseverance” stands at the Wilma P. Mankiller Health Center in Stilwell. The statue was designed by five Cherokee artists – Devon Tidwell-Isaacs, Daniel Flynn, Roger Cain, Shawna Cain and Reuben Cain – and represents the Cherokee people’s endurance to overcome and the ability to prosper.
For additional information, please see notes to basic financial statements in the CAFR at www.cherokee.org.
Alissa Baker-Oglesbee participated in online Cherokee classes while attending Northwestern University in Chicago.

The Cherokee Nation continued to promote the Cherokee language through various programs and events, including the Cherokee Language Master Apprentice Program and use of online tools to reach and teach more individuals. The tribe also continued to share its culture and history with more people through cultural presentations hosted by Cherokee Nation Community and Cultural Outreach.

Alissa Baker-Oglesbee is one of many benefitting from Cherokee Nation's efforts. She began the online Cherokee classes taught by Ed Fields last year, when she was at Chicago’s Northwestern University. When she returns home, she said she’ll be teaching at Northeastern State University.

“I’m very happy that Cherokee Nation makes a resource such as online Cherokee language courses available. I enjoy learning our Cherokee language because it helps me feel grounded in the culture and teaches me how I can make the world a better place. Language preservation is important because I think our language is our identity as a Nation; it guides us to take care of one another and to do the right things,” said Baker-Oglesbee.
New Testament in the Cherokee language

The Cherokee Nation published the New Testament red letter edition of the Bible in the Cherokee syllabary for the first time. The tribe’s language program translated and published the Bible and sought to correct translation errors made by missionaries to the Cherokee Nation in the 1860s. The new Cherokee Nation-published Bible also marks the first time a Cherokee syllabary Bible includes red lettering of the words of Jesus Christ. To purchase a copy, visit www.cherokeegiftshop.com.


Master Apprentice Language Program

The Cherokee Nation started the Cherokee Language Master Apprentice Program two years ago to teach more young adults to be conversationally proficient Cherokee speakers and teachers. Participants learn language from fluent speakers Doris Shell, Cora Flute and Gary Vann. In addition to time with the master speakers, students are encouraged to visit Cherokee-fluent elders to learn and practice speaking the language.

1,000

Average number of participants in community language classes over the past four years. The Cherokee Nation offers community language classes at several locations in the 14-county jurisdiction each spring and fall.

518

Number of individuals that received a certificate of completion in Cherokee language community and online classes in the past four years.

94

Cherokee Nation citizens have been designated Cherokee National Treasures. The award is given in recognition of Cherokee artisans who have exhibited exceptional skill and knowledge in traditional Cherokee arts. Their story is told in a new book, “Cherokee National Treasures: In Their Own Words.” To order a copy, visit www.cherokeegiftshop.com.

Cherokee Nation Museum Visits


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The Cherokee Nation invests millions of dollars annually into improving the infrastructure of the tribe’s 14-county jurisdiction. Last year, the improvements included 77.8 miles of roadway, five new bridges and 11 water and sanitation projects at a cost of $13.2 million.

As part of the infrastructure improvements, the tribe replaced five bridges along Kenwood Road in Delaware and Mayes counties, making travel safer. A $1.7 million road improvement project at Cherokee Nation Industrial Park in Adair County included new, durable concrete lanes, asphalt repaving and 32 solar-powered streetlights.

“Right now with the economy like it is and the state and government like it is, if it wasn't for Cherokee Nation, we'd be out of luck. They help us in a lot of ways, and it sure benefits the county a great deal. I really appreciate all the Cherokee Nation has done to help Delaware County,” said Martin Kirk, Delaware County District 3 Commissioner.
W.W. Keeler Tribal Complex addition


Kenwood Road bridges

The Cherokee Nation repaired five structurally deficient bridges on Kenwood Road, making the road safer for drivers in Delaware and Mayes counties. The tribe’s roads program completed the bridge projects using $5.6 million from the tribal transportation program budget.

Miles of roads constructed

Since FY2012, the Cherokee Nation has constructed 377 miles of roadway.

$1.4M

Invested on waterline and sewer projects in five counties.

117,000

New square footage of the W.W. Keeler Complex in Tahlequah after the addition of a 31,550-square-foot second story.

Figures reflect from Oct 1, 2015 - Sept 30, 2016
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Education

Throughout history, Cherokee Nation has invested in education, whether it be in the old homelands or with the construction of the Cherokee National Male Seminary and Cherokee National Female Seminary after removal to Indian Territory. Today is no different as the tribe continues to invest in the education of young Cherokees throughout northeast Oklahoma.

That commitment to education is evident from early childhood through college. The Cherokee Nation operates seven Early Head Start facilities and 12 Head Start facilities for children across the 14-county jurisdiction. The tribe also provided $4.7 million to more than 100 public school districts last year. Various scholarship programs are available to Cherokee youth, including the Cherokee Nation Self Help Scholarship program that provides up to $2,000 per semester to qualifying students.

Cherokee Nation citizen Emily Christie, a graduate of Stilwell High School and sophomore at Northeastern State University, is a Cherokee Nation Self Help Scholarship recipient. She expects to graduate in May 2020 with a bachelor’s in political science.

“I think the tribe’s investment in education is way more than appreciated by all who receive a scholarship. For me personally, it allows me to continue my education and gives me the opportunity and ability to graduate debt free,” Christie said.
STEM training for NE Oklahoma educators
The Cherokee Nation provided Science, Technology, Engineering and Math training to nearly 200 teachers at the tribe’s free annual Teachers of Successful Students conference. Teachers learn to apply hands-on STEM activities and reading into everyday learning. The tribe also provided $1,000 Creative Teaching Grants to 10 conference attendees who entered STEM classroom project submissions.

Record amount given to local school districts
The Cherokee Nation annually gives millions of dollars to public schools at the tribe’s annual Public School Appreciation Day, providing a boost in revenue to many schools struggling under the weight of state budget cuts. Since 2002, the tribe has awarded $40.1 million from car tag revenue to more than 100 school districts in northeast Oklahoma.

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The Cherokee Nation assists more than 6,000 individuals annually with housing programs. Housing assistance for tribal citizens last year included building about 165 homes for Cherokee families through the Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation’s New Home Construction Program, including homes built through the new housing in Roland, Vian and West Siloam Springs. The Housing Authority also helped more than 1,800 Cherokee Nation citizens through the rental assistance programs. The tribe helped 187 families become first-time homeowners through the Commerce Department’s Mortgage Assistance Program, which provides $20,000 to Cherokee families for the down payment on a new home and $5,000 in a matched savings account.

“The Cherokee Nation’s housing programs mean everything to us. Without their help we wouldn’t be able to have this home. We are very appreciative of all they do,” said Cherokee Nation citizen Sherry Tounzen, who with her husband, Dale, received a home through the New Home Construction Program at the new housing addition in Vian.
New homes for Cherokee families

Last year, the Cherokee Nation built 165 new homes for Cherokee Nation citizens through the Housing Authority of the Cherokee Nation’s New Home Construction Program. Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Bill John Baker implemented the New Home Construction Program in 2012, and since then more than 500 families have utilized the program.

Housing assistance for college students

The College Housing Assistance Program provides up to $1,000 per semester to low-income, Native American students. The program helped 135 students with safe and affordable housing while attending college in fiscal year 2016. The program is funded through the Native American Housing Assistance and Self Determination Act (NAHASDA).

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Health

Cherokee Nation Health Services takes great pride in being a leader in health care throughout Indian Country. The tribe operates the largest tribal health care system in the country, receiving 1.2 million patient visits in fiscal year 2016.

Last year, the tribe continued to grow its health care system with the expansion of the Wilma P. Mankiller Health Center in Stilwell and the new Sam Hider Health Center in Jay. The Cherokee Nation also continued with its planning of the new Cherokee Nation Outpatient Health Center being constructed next to W.W. Hastings Hospital in Tahlequah. The tribe made great strides in its preventative health programs, including becoming the first tribe in the nation to receive accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board.

“Before I came here I had never even used the Wilma P. Mankiller Health Center and just assigned by chance. My diabetes was out of control and I was desperate. From the time I walked in the door they not only provided me with treatment, they gave me the tools and education I needed to make a change, and they are available whenever I need them. The doctors and the entire staff here in Stilwell are world-class,” said Cherokee Nation citizen Carolyn Bentley.
New facility will expand patient services

The Cherokee Nation is currently constructing the tribe's new 469,000-square-foot outpatient health facility. When completed in 2019, it will be the largest health center of any tribe in the country. The four-story facility will feature 180 exam rooms; access to an MRI machine; 10 new cardiac, lung and kidney specialists; and for the first time ever, an ambulatory surgery center.

Leading Indian Country

The Cherokee Nation's public health office is the first tribe in the nation to receive accreditation from the Public Health Accreditation Board. The tribe's public health team has worked on initiatives such as Zika Virus preparedness planning, community walking groups, school community gardens and more. The tribe also pays entry fees to 5K races and operates a gym with certified public health trainers to promote a healthier lifestyle.

1.2M

Total patient visits for all nine Cherokee Nation health centers and W.W. Hastings Hospital. Cherokee Nation has the largest tribally operated health system in the United States.

43,000

Miles run by more than 13,000 Cherokee Nation Health Services WINGS program participants last year.

10,325

Diabetes patients who received medication, medical supplies and medical equipment last year.

Health Services FY2016 Expenses

- Direct Patient Care: 66.4%
- Community Health and Education: 11.8%
- Contracted Health: 12.2%
- Staffing and Operations: 9.6%

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A strong family and community are core values of the Cherokee people, and the Cherokee Nation strived to keep building the strength of both last year.

To strengthen those values, the tribe established a network in Cherokee County that provides items for foster children and donated $75,000 to organizations that operate backpack programs that supply students with school supplies and weekend snacks. The Cherokee Nation also contributed money to several communities for projects, such as the first playground in the community of Ketchum and to help build a playground for special needs children in Tahlequah.

Cherokee Nation Indian Child Welfare has custody of approximately 80 children at any time of the year, but intervenes as a party and participates in more than 1,600 cases per year throughout the United States. ICW participates by attending court hearings, working to reunify families, and meeting all needs as they pertain to each case.

“Fostering and adopting our children through Cherokee Nation ICW has been one of the greatest blessings of our lives. We believe God brought us here by divine appointment. We know that it is our calling to not only care for these children ourselves, but help find those who will also step up to the plate with us,” said John Rozell, Cherokee Nation employee and adoptive parent.
**Partnering to supply students with necessities**
The Cherokee Nation donated $75,000 to 20 organizations that participate in programs that send backpacks home with students who are in need of everything from school supplies to nutritious weekend snacks. The 20 programs served 3,643 students, with half of those students being Cherokee Nation citizens.

**Networking to serve foster children**
Cherokee Nation partnered with Oklahoma Department of Human Services and CarePortal to start a network to better serve Cherokee County children in the child welfare system or who are at risk of being placed in foster care. Cherokee Nation is the first tribe in Oklahoma to start a CarePortal network. The network partners with area churches to provide donated car seats, clothing and beds for foster children.

**Contributions to Communities**

- $448k to 196 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations
- $525k to 288 community youth programs
- $748k to 184 rural police and fire departments
- $792k to communities for improvements and programs

**Figures reflect from Oct. 1, 2015 - Sept. 30, 2016**

- 20,522 Meals were served at nutrition sites throughout the tribe’s 14-county jurisdiction. Also, 6,425 warm meals were delivered to homes.
- $2.0M For 41 small business loans through Cherokee Nation Commerce Services. The department also issued 1,403 loans totaling $1.8 million.
- 46,723 Passengers received rides to school, jobs and medical appointments using Cherokee Nation Community Services transit.

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The Cherokee Nation continued to not only preserve the tribe’s current natural resources, but improve the resources for future generations.

Among the actions taken, the tribe appointed the first secretary of natural resources, a cabinet level position to oversee the tribe’s environmental programs and advise Principal Chief Bill John Baker and the Tribal Council on land, air and natural resources policies. The position was created by the 1999 Cherokee Nation Constitution but never filled until Hill’s nomination by Chief Baker and confirmation by the Tribal Council in October 2015. The Cherokee Nation also issued more than 105,000 hunting and fishing licenses to Cherokee Nation citizens across the state of Oklahoma. The 2015 hunting and fishing compact signed by Principal Chief Bill John Baker and Governor Mary Fallin unlocks as much as $4 million in federal money for wildlife conservation in Oklahoma.

“The water, land and natural resources have always been important to the way Cherokees live. It is so great that our tribe continues to recognize that and fights to preserve and protect the environment for future generations, whether it be through legal action or partnering with other governments or organizations,” said Cherokee Nation citizen Josh Fourkiller, of Stilwell.

Cherokee Nation citizen Josh Fourkiller fishes at the Adair County Park in Stilwell.
Initial hunting and fishing licenses issued
The first batch of hunting and fishing licenses issued by the tribe hit mailboxes of Cherokee Nation citizens across Oklahoma in 2016 after the tribe and state entered into a hunting and fishing compact in 2015. The agreement expands hunting and fishing rights for Cherokee Nation citizens to all 77 counties and unlocks as much as $4 million in federal money for the state wildlife department, monies for which tribes are not eligible to apply.

Promoting conservation of natural resources
The Cherokee Nation annually hosts an environmental festival to help promote conservation and protection of natural resources in the community. The festival, hosted by the tribe’s environmental programs department, promotes awareness of environmental issues such as recycling, water quality and land conservation.

3,582
Packets of rare heirloom seeds were distributed to tribal citizens for food and cultural purposes. The Cherokee Nation Seed Bank program maintains an inventory of seeds that are available in early spring each year.

4,000
Acres of agricultural pastureland leased to develop a wind farm and advance clean energy. The addition of the wind farm will generate approximately $1 million per year for the tribe.

105,805
Number of hunting and fishing licenses issued to Cherokee Nation citizens over the age of 16 living in Oklahoma. For information or to apply for a hunting and fishing license, please visit www.cherokee.org/Services/Tax-Commission/Hunting-and-Fishing.

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At-large citizens

Cherokee Nation citizens living outside the 14-county jurisdiction can visit a website dedicated exclusively to connecting at-large citizens with information on tribal and federal services.

The website, www.CherokeesAtLarge.org, features information on home loans, health care services, education scholarships and more.

At-large citizens can subscribe to an email list for updates on community events and Cherokee Nation information. An interactive map displaying all the Indian Health Service facilities available to Native Americans is also featured on the website.

More than 200,000 of the Cherokee Nation’s 355,000 citizens live outside the tribe’s jurisdiction. Many of these citizens belong to one of the two dozen at-large Cherokee community organizations across the country.

All official Cherokee community organizations are members of the Cherokee Nation Community Association, which is operated by the tribe’s Community and Cultural Outreach department. For more information on Cherokee Nation Community and Cultural Outreach, visit www.cherokee.org/Services/Community/CommunityAndCulture.
At-large health care options for Cherokee Nation Citizens

As a tribal citizen of the Cherokee Nation, you are eligible to receive care at any health facility funded by the Indian Health Service system, regardless of where you live.

Visit https://www.ihs.gov/findhealthcare to find the Indian Health Service facility nearest you.

Home loans for Cherokee Nation citizens through HUD

At-large Cherokee Nation citizens who reside in a HUD-designated area may be eligible to apply for Section 184 Native American Home Loans through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

For more information, visit portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD (search for Section 184 Indian Home Loan in the search box).

Citizens at large living in Oklahoma can purchase vehicle tags

Cherokee Nation citizens across the state of Oklahoma can purchase a Cherokee Nation license plate.

The tags are on sale at any of the five Cherokee Nation tag offices, located in Adair, Collinsville, Jay, Sallisaw, Tahlequah and east Tulsa.

Cherokee Nation Official Satellite Organizations

Capital City Cherokee Community - Washington, D.C. area
Central Oklahoma Cherokee Alliance - Oklahoma City, OK area
Central Texas Cherokee Township - Austin, TX area
Cherokee Citizens League of Southeast Texas - Houston, TX area
Cherokee Community of Central California - Bakersfield, CA area
Cherokee Community of North Texas - Dallas/Ft. Worth area
Cherokee Community of the Inland Empire - Southern Central CA area
Cherokee Society of the Greater Bay Area - San Francisco, CA area
Cherokee Township of San Antonio - San Antonio, TX area
Cherokee Community of Puget Sound - Seattle/Tacoma, WA area
Cherokees of Central Florida - Central FL area
Cherokees of Northern Central Valley - Northern CA area
Cherokees of Orange County - Orange County, CA area
Colorado Cherokee Circle - Denver, CO area
Desert Cherokees - Tucson, AZ area
Greater Wichita Area Cherokee Community - Wichita, KS area
Kansas City Cherokee Community - Kansas City, KS/MO area
Mt. Hood Cherokees - Portland, OR area
New Mexico Cherokees - Albuquerque, NM area
San Diego Cherokee Communities - San Diego, CA area
Tsalagi LA - Los Angeles, CA area
Valley of the Sun Cherokees - Phoenix, AZ area
Willamette TsaLaGi Community - Northern OR area

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Future Developments

Cherokee Springs Plaza

New facility at W.W. Hastings Hospital campus

Cherokee National Capitol Museum

Pathway to Museums

Saline Courthouse