



# THE COMANCHE NATION NEWS

## Lords of the Plains

Comanche Nation Public Information Office, Lawton, OK

Positsu Mta (February) 2026

VOLUME 27 EDITION 2

### NASA Selects Numunu Martinez JV for \$7.2M Contract in Latest Award

Comanche Nation Enterprises, Inc.'s newly formed joint-venture, Numunu Martinez Joint Venture (NMJV), proudly announces the award of a \$7.2 million demolition contract at NASA's Kennedy Space Center. The project spans 730 days and involves the demolition of 48 structures across NASA KSC and Cape Canaveral Space Force Station, marking a significant step in NASA's ongoing modernization efforts.

Scope of Work includes:

- Demolition of facilities within an active spaceport environment
- Abatement and management of hazardous and regulated materials
- Site remediation and environmental compliance
- Utility identification, isolation, and disconnection
- Safe debris removal and disposal in accordance with NASA requirements

"This award is significant for Comanche Nation Enterprises, Inc and we are honored to support NASA's mission at Kennedy Space Center," George Tahdoohnippah, CEO of Numunu Martinez JV said.

About NMJV

Numunu Martinez JV unites a proven Tribal 8(a) firm with a highly respected WOSB GC to deliver compliant, on-time, on-budget federal construction projects across CONUS. As a Tribal 8(a) JV, we offer streamlined sole-source acquisition options and exceptional value to their government clients.



### CIVA Seeks New Princess

The Comanche Indian Veterans Association is currently accepting nomination packets for the Princess candidates until March 31, their current princess, Clara Yazzie, term will end on Armed Forces Day, May 16.

Princess Candidates must:

- Be an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation
- Be a direct descendant of a Comanche Veteran
- Be of impeccable character
- Have never been married
- Have no children
- Be between the ages of 13 and 17 years
- They must provide their own regalia
- Able to sing Comanche Hymns and sign language is a plus

Nomination packet must include a 5x7 photograph in regalia; a copy of CDIB, and a biography which can include news articles, school records, or any other pertinent information.

Nomination packets should be submitted to:  
Dominic Pawlowski  
CIVA Secretary  
By e-mail: mymantees@gmail.com

Any questions should be directed to the CIVA Commander, Tom

## SNOW MUCH FUN!

Comanche Tribal Members Engage in Winter Activities



After a winter storm blankets most of the country with snow and cold temperatures, tribal members go outside to enjoy some winter activities. CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Kynleigh Mithlo, 4, enjoys sledding down a hill; Maggie Jo Mithlo, one-month makes her first snow angel; Xavier Waysepappy makes a snow angel at Holy City in the Wichita Wildlife Refuge; Judah Rain Travis enjoys the snow; Kaydrian Aitson and Yesenia Aitson make snow angels at Holy Family; and Arryn River Travis, 5, makes a snow angel.

Courtesy Photos

## Tribal Administrator Lisa Dawsey's Mid Year Review on Budget and Program Growth

This Report provides a comprehensive summary of administrative operations, fiscal oversight, policy implementation, community engagement, compliance activities, and strategic planning conducted by the Office of the Tribal Administrator from July 1 through December 31, 2025. This report consolidates all monthly reports submitted during this period, including operational updates, departmental oversight, grant activity, facilities coordination, food security initiatives, and the 2025 Elders Day review, into a unified record of governance and administrative performance.

The Tribal Administrator serves as the Head of Administration of the Comanche Nation. The position is elected by the Comanche Nation Tribal Council, establishing accountability directly to the governing body elected by the tribal membership. In accordance with the Nation's governance structure, the Tribal Administrator reports to the seven-member Comanche Nation Business Committee (CBC), which provides policy approval and oversight. This structure ensures a clear separation between policy development and day-to-day operations while maintaining transparency, accountability, and continuity of services across all tribal departments and programs.

Throughout the reporting period, the Office of the Tribal Administrator provided executive oversight for all tribal departments and programs, ensuring continuity of services, compliance with tribal, federal, and grant requirements, and responsible stewardship of tribal resources. Despite staffing transitions, facility relocations, and increased service demands, operations remained stable and responsive to tribal member



of active federal grants during this period, with ongoing monitoring to ensure compliance with grant terms, reporting requirements, and audit standards. New grant awards were secured across multiple program areas, while training was provided to directors and program staff on federal regulations, allowable and unallowable costs, internal controls, audit preparedness, and reporting requirements. These efforts strengthened compliance and reduced long-term financial risk to the Nation.

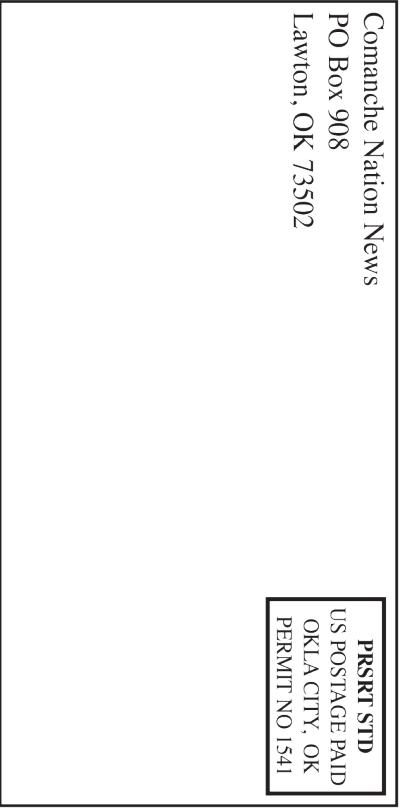
During this reporting period, the Office of the Tribal Administrator finalized and implemented Comanche Nation Gaming (CNG) Guidelines applicable to all departments receiving gaming funds, following review and approval through the Tribal Council. These guidelines were established to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency in the administration of gaming-funded assistance across all programs. The intent of the guidelines is to promote efficiency, accountability, and self-reliance while avoiding long-term dependency on recurring bill payment assistance. By standardizing eligibility criteria and administrative processes, the Nation strengthened equitable access to resources and ensured responsible stewardship of gaming funds for the benefit of all tribal members.

Community outreach and food security initiatives expanded during this reporting period in response to identified needs. The Comanche Nation established a Food Pantry to support families experiencing food insecurity, coordinated food assistance efforts, and partnered with local businesses and organizations

Dawsey

needs. Workforce oversight included recruitment for critical positions, onboarding of new employees, processing of separations and retirements, and employee recognition initiatives acknowledging long-term service and reinforcing organizational morale.

Fiscal oversight remained a priority during the reporting period. The Office of the Tribal Administrator coordinated closely with the Finance Department to conduct ongoing reviews of departmental expenditures against approved FY2026 budgets. These reviews allowed for early identification of spending trends, implementation of corrective actions where necessary, and timely notification to leadership when potential fiscal risks were identified. Fuel expenditures, operational costs, and delayed billings were monitored closely to ensure transparency and accurate financial reporting. Grant oversight continued to be a significant component of administrative responsibility. The Comanche Nation maintained a substantial portfolio



### Comanche Cache Casino Celebrates First Anniversary Chef Paul Wahlberg to Make Appearance at Oklahoma's Only Wahlburgers

Comanche Cache Casino is celebrating its first anniversary since reopening after its remodel and expansion with a special "One Year of Winning" event on February 12, from noon to 8 p.m. and features Chef Paul Wahlberg, co-founder of Wahlburgers.

Comanche Cache Casino reopened last February, unveiling an expanded gaming floor and new amenities designed to enhance the guest experience. The expansion included 330 new slot machines, along with the addition of a convenience store and gas station.

The remodel also coincided with another milestone, the launch of Oklahoma's first Wahlburgers. The restaurant remains the only Wahlburgers location in the state and features a menu of burgers, sandwiches, salads and desserts.

"Over the past year, we have been thrilled to see guests embrace everything Comanche Cache Casino has to offer after the remodel and expansion," said Brian Weryavah, general manager of Comanche Cache Casino. "Bringing Chef Paul Wahlberg to our one-of-a-kind Wahlburgers location is a fun way to celebrate the anniversary and create another memorable experience for our guests."

The anniversary event will include hot seat drawings every 30 minutes, with two winners receiving \$100 to \$500 in Comanche Credit, and raffle tickets available at 3 p.m. for a chance to win \$100 Wahlburgers gift cards, with winners announced at 6 p.m.

Guests can also sign up for a free menu tasting and meet-and-greet with Chef Paul Wahlberg at 5 p.m. Sign-ups begin at 3 p.m. on the day of the event inside Wahlburgers.

Comanche Cache Casino is located at 16193 OK-115 in Cache, Oklahoma.

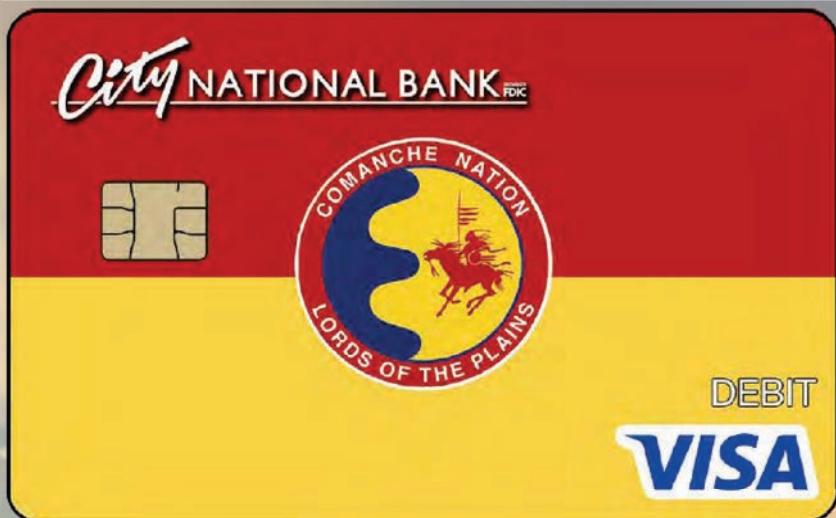
For more information about Comanche Cache Casino, visit [www.comanchecachecasino.com](http://www.comanchecachecasino.com).

For more information about Wahlburgers, visit [www.wahlburgers.com](http://www.wahlburgers.com).

For more information on Comanche Nation Entertainment properties, visit [www.comanchenationentertainment.com](http://www.comanchenationentertainment.com) or follow the company on Facebook.

MEMBER  
FDIC

# OPEN A COMANCHE PRIDE ACCOUNT

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CNB1901.COM/COMANCHE-PRIDE  
@cnb1901

**We Can Help You  
Get Started  
Today!**



## REPORT

Continued from Page 1

to support food drives and donations. These initiatives were implemented to ensure timely assistance to tribal members while leveraging partnerships to maximize community impact. As part of ongoing service improvement, plans are underway to relocate the Food Pantry to the former Elderly Center in Lawton to improve accessibility, safety, and operational efficiency.

Facilities and operational coordination remained an important focus throughout the reporting period. Planning and execution continued for the consolidation and relocation of elder-focused programs to improve safety, accessibility, and service efficiency. Due to ongoing vandalism and security concerns at the prior location, the Elderly Center was relocated to the Edith Gordon Kassanavoid Center. This move was undertaken to ensure the safety of elders, staff, and visitors while improving service delivery. The new location functions as a centralized "one-stop shop" for elder services, providing access to Community Health Representatives (CHR), Injury Prevention, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, Angels Program, Caregivers support, and the Elders Council. This consolidation enhances coordination among programs, reduces barriers to access, and improves the overall experience for Comanche elders. Additional facility coordination included temporary relocations due to maintenance issues, office closures related to holidays and observances, and clear communication to ensure minimal disruption to services. Future priorities include relocating the modular building back to the tribal complex, and completing the dance grounds to support cultural activities and community gatherings.

A significant component of this Semi-Annual Report is the review of the 2025 Elders Day Cel-

eration, which was successfully held at the Great Plains Coliseum. The event honored Comanche elders through benefit distribution, cultural programming, and vendor participation. Participation metrics reflected strong engagement, with benefits distributed through in-person pickup, mailed checks, and direct deposit. A post-event fiscal review identified total expenditures of \$45,165.60, with facility rental accounting for the largest portion of costs. Based on this review, opportunities were identified to reduce expenses and improve accessibility for the 2026 Elders Day celebration by considering alternative venues. Potential cost savings may be redirected toward additional elder services, improved meals or giveaways, transportation assistance, and expanded cultural programming, subject to leadership and Elders Council guidance.

As the Office of the Tribal Administrator enters the final year of the current term, focused efforts will be directed toward completing key priorities that directly support tribal members and strengthen essential services. These goals include completing the dance grounds; securing a Veterans Affairs (VA) representative to assist Comanche veterans with accessing benefits and services; relocating the modular building back to the tribal complex; moving the Food Pantry to the former Elderly Center in Lawton; and ensuring that Onaa Kahni receives a new facility with a built-in storm shelter to provide a safer environment for Comanche children. These priorities reflect a continued commitment to infrastructure improvement, service expansion, and protection of vulnerable populations.

Effective tribal governance requires collaboration, professionalism, and a shared commitment to the responsibilities entrusted by the

tribal membership. The Office of the Tribal Administrator emphasizes the importance of conducting business with a focus on the collective good of all tribal members rather than individual interests or personal agendas. When leadership and administration set aside differences and remain focused on their duties, decision-making becomes more effective, efficient, and productive, supporting respectful working relationships and a stable governmental environment.

It has been a pleasure to serve our tribal members, and I sincerely appreciate all the support provided during my tenure. Despite the obstacles and challenges faced during this term, I will continue to serve all tribal members with the utmost respect for this position and for the responsibilities it carries. The most rewarding aspect of this role has been creating avenues to serve our tribal community by expanding access to services and resources for our people. The Office of the Tribal Administrator remains committed to honoring the trust placed by the Comanche Nation Tribal Council and to working in good faith with the Comanche Nation Business Committee to advance the interests of all tribal members. The responsibilities of tribal governance require professionalism, mutual respect, and a shared dedication to service over self-interest. As the Comanche Nation moves forward, continued success will depend on clear communication, respect for established governance structures, and a unified commitment to responsible decision-making. The Office of the Tribal Administrator stands ready to continue providing transparent administration, sound fiscal stewardship, and steady oversight of tribal operations in service to the Comanche Nation and its people.



Comanche Nation Child Care Development Fund hosts a books and pajamas night on January 9 at Watchetaker Hall. Children of all ages were welcomed to a night of literacy, and each one received two books.

## Story and PJ Night Brings Youth of all Ages

Story and Photos by Natascha Mercadante/News Staff

On January 9, the Comanche Nation Child Care Development Fund hosted a "Books and Pajamas" event at Watchetaker Hall.

Director Desiree DeVine said the gathering featured several readers.

"The Comanche Chairman, Mr. Forrest Tahdoahniippah," she said. "Our second was Ms. Kathy Figueroa Parker, and she read a book that she actually wrote, and then we had, third up was from the Comanche Nation Language Department, Ms. Billie Krager, and then our last reader was Ms. Angela Passi, and she is our director at the *Numu Turetuu* Early Childhood site."

DeVine said everything planned for the youth is special.

"Reading, storytelling, that's an art that natives done traditionally," she said. "So, I think being out there, putting different readers out there. We had everything from modern books to traditional stories tonight. So, I think that giving the kids a range of storytelling was a good thing."

Those who attended received two free books.

DeVine said the Comanche Nation Administration Office also helped put on the night's reading event and future ones as well.

"We were approached with the idea that they wanted to do some events for the children, some family nights, some engagement activities," she said. "So, we kind of had a few meetings; did some back and forth [on] what we wanted to do...we had several things out there. And so, it was just like, 'Well, we'll start with storytelling.' And then that was tonight. And then our next event is on January 23, all the events are on Fridays, and January 23 is going to be Coco with the Chairman. And we're going to have a short film, pickles, popcorn [and] a light meal. And so, all the youth are invited again with their families. And then in February, we have two events. The first one is on February 6th, and that is our family game night. And so, it's going to be a lot of fun. We're going to have some games. We got...some Jenga, some giant Jenga, giant connect four, Twister, musical chairs [and] another meal for the families. And then our last event is going to be the family fun night. We're going to, I'm not going to tell what's all going to be there, but we're going to have some, some nice things for the kids to do and the families."

She said they wanted to accommodate all ages and incomes of Comanche youths.

# ROADS OF OUR ANCESTORS, ROADS OF MY OWN.

A NEW EXHIBIT COMING  
**FRIDAY, FEB. 13TH**  
**5:30 - 7:30 P.M.**

FEATURING WORKS BY  
**DUKON HARRIS**



Monday - Friday 8 AM - 5 PM  
Saturdays 10 AM - 2 PM

701 NW Ferris Ave.  
Lawton, OK 73507  
580-360-0683

# Programs

## Child Support Services Announces Court Dates

### In the Comanche Nation Tribal Court

- Dana Chasenah: CNCSP-17-35; Application for Indirect Contempt
- Warren Kassanavoid: CNC-SP-17-35; Application for Indirect Contempt
- Bobby Komahcheet: CNC-SP-25-12; Application for Indirect Contempt
- Lonnie Komahcheet: CNC-SP-21-48; Application for Indirect Contempt

### In the Court of Indian Offenses

- Joshua Imotichey: CIV-07-A04; Application for Indirect Contempt

Section 609 (c) Rule 3 of the Comanche Nation Court Codes allows for service by publication in instances where the location of the subject is unknown, or when the subject of service has been unable to be served by traditional means. CNCSP needs the above name(s) to be placed in our upcoming Comanche Nation Newspaper.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT ALL COMANCHE NATION TRIBAL COURT CHILD HEARINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN PERSON.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT ALL COURT OF INDIAN OFFENSES CHILD SUPPORT HEARINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED IN PERSON.

## MMIP Listening Session

The Missing Murdered Indigenous Peoples Subcommittee invites everyone to a listening session beginning 9:30 a.m. on February 19 at the Comanche Nation Complex, 584 NW Bingo Rd., Lawton, Okla.

The Subcommittee unites community members, tribal partners, and stakeholders dedicated to addressing Missing and Murdered Indigenous People (MMIP). They work together to strengthen support systems and advance meaningful solutions for Indigenous communities.

MMIP initiatives are especially important in Oklahoma, home to one of the largest Indigenous populations in the country. These efforts strengthen coordination among tribal, local, and state partners, improve responses to cases, and ensure Indigenous families receive the attention and support they deserve.

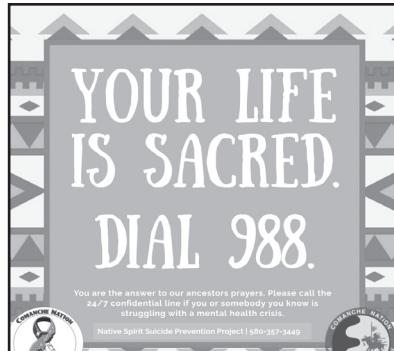
The MMIP Subcommittee will host listening sessions to deepen our understanding of the barriers faced in MMIP cases. Two sessions will be held concurrently: one with family members of MMIP individuals and victim advocates, and a second with law enforcement, prosecutors, and tribal advocates.

For more information, call (405) 521-3921

## Family Fun Night

At 6 p.m. on February 20, Comanche Nation Administration and Child Care Development Center will host a Family Fun Night in Watchetaker Hall located at the Comanche Nation Headquarters in Lawton, Oklahoma.

As part of their Winter Family Community Engagement Series, there will be pizza and games. All youth ages are invited to attend.



## CNHE Graduate Student of the Month Sandra Zambrana



**Zambrana**

Sandra Zambrana is a Registered Nurse in the ER at the Lawton Indian Hospital in Lawton, Oklahoma. She is the daughter of the late Randolph "Randy" Zambrana and Tammy Poahway Zambrana, and granddaughter of Margaret and Lester Poahway.

Zambrana graduated from Oklahoma State University - Oklahoma City with her Associate's Degree in Nursing in 2019, and in 2021, graduated from Southwestern Oklahoma State University with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She is currently attending Midwestern State University and pursuing her Master of Science in Nursing - Family Nurse Practitioner.

She believes that anything is possible with time and effort and is committed to improving health outcomes for individuals and families.

-GO POKES.

## CNHE Undergraduate Student of the Month Darrell Wildcat Jr.



**Wildcat**

The Higher Education Student of the Month for February is Darrell "Beaushee" Wildcat Jr.

He is Pawnee, Comanche, Kiowa, and Euchee. His folks are Darrell and Carla Wildcat and he is an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation.

Wildcat represents the Kwaharau and the Penatuka bands and grew up in Anadarko, Oklahoma, now residing in Pawhuska, Oklahoma with his wife and kids.

He comes from a cultural background and participates in powwows across the country.

Wildcat is taking courses to achieve a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration with an emphasis in Tribal Nation Building.

He is interested in building a future, not only for his family, but for his tribes and communities as well.

Wildcat would like to thank the Comanche Nation Higher Education for assisting him in my educational endeavors.

## Comanche Nation Environmental Programs Continue, Expand Several Projects



**Frankie Patterson of the Office of Environmental Programs stands in front of the CNOEP portable recycle bin. The CNOEP office hours are 7:30 a.m. -6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday and more information can be found by calling (580) 360-0689.**

As the Office of the Comanche Nation Environmental Programs (CNOEP) bring in the new year, they look forward to continue growth, progress, and opportunities to better serve Comanche people. They extend their sincere appreciation to all Comanche Nation members and programs who contribute to positive environmental change within communities.

### Solid Waste Division:

The Solid Waste division is currently experiencing a backlog of trailer and container drop requests due to a recent breakdown of a truck.

Their team is currently operating on one vehicle and is working hard to resolve these issues and resume normal service operations. If you have submitted an application and are curious about the wait time, give the CNOEP office a call, and they'll get you an estimated time frame for service. They appreciate your patience and understanding during this time.

Opening containers on CNOEP property for Comanche Nation members only on a trial basis. (TBA)

Requirement: Must have Tribal ID

and sign in at the CNOEP Office for drop-off (NO EXCEPTIONS).

This trial will gather data for future services.

### Community Round Robins:

Planning events in Apache, Cache, and Walters. Dates will be announced once finalized.

### Site Cleanups:

Their team has successfully collected recycling materials from 23 sites within and surrounding the Comanche Nation. They sincerely thank all participants who contributed to these recycling efforts, helping to keep our lands clean and safe for both people and wildlife.

### New Recycling Trailers:

Two new recycling trailers will be deployed to communities on a rotational basis, specifically designed to collect cardboard, plastic, and aluminum. They will be starting off at the Comanche Nation community building in Apache.

### Drop-Off Facility:

Tribal and local members can continue to utilize their facility for dropping off a variety of recycling items, including tires, metal, paint, cardboard, plastic and aluminum.

They extend a heartfelt thank you to all of their recycling customers and community members for their continued support and participation in the environmental programs.

The CNOEP office hours are 7:30 a.m. -6:00 p.m. Monday – Friday and more information can be found by calling (580) 360-0689.

## CNOEP Water Quality Safety, Disposal Tips

February is a time to celebrate what everyone loves—and at the Comanche Nation Water Quality Department, they're showing love to one of their most important resources: water.

Rivers, creeks, lakes, and groundwater are vital to the health of people, wildlife, and future generations. Even during the winter months, water systems continue to face challenges such as litter, runoff, and improper disposal of household chemicals. Protecting water is a responsibility we all share.

This month, they encourage

the community to take small but meaningful steps to help protect tribal waters:

- Pick up litter to prevent trash from washing into rivers and streams.
- Properly dispose of grease, oil, and other household chemicals.
- Report any unusual water color, odor or fish kills.

Water is life. Caring for waters honors Comanche ancestors and preserves these resources for generations to come. The Water Quality Department continues year-

round monitoring and outreach to ensure the protection of tribal waters, and they appreciate the community's ongoing support.

If you have questions, concerns, or would like to report a water quality issue, please contact the Comanche Nation Water Quality Department Coordinator Tito Lindsey can be contacted through email at Tito.Lindsey@comanchenation.com and phone via (580) 360-5342.

Let's work together to love water—today and always.

## Community Grief Support Group

Community Grief Support Group will take place at 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. every second and fourth Wednesday beginning February 11 at Comanche Nation Prevention and Recovery Outpatient Office located at 807 SW F. Ave. in Lawton, Oklahoma.

The event will have a supportive circle rooted in respect and connection as well open conversation, listening and shared understanding. There will also be gentle coping tools.

More information can be found by email at daviaann.connywerdy@comanchenation.com and calling (580) 360 - 07722.

**HEY!**

**ARE YOU LOOKING FOR ASSISTANCE IN PAYING FOR CHILD CARE COST?**

**THE COMANCHE NATION CHILD CARE SUBSIDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS TAKING APPLICATIONS FOR OUR SUBSIDY PROGRAM THAT PAYS FOR CHILD CARE.**

**OPEN TO ALL FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES**

**PLEASE GO TO THE COMANCHE NATION WEBSITE FOR DETAILS, SERVICE AREA AND GUIDELINES.**

**YOU MAY ALSO EMAIL THE ADDRESS BELOW FOR INFORMATION.**

**COMANCHE NATION  
LORDS OF THE PLAINS**

**CHILDCARE@COMANCHENATION.COM**

# Culinary Corner/ Fun Page

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 <i>Frederick 1<sup>st</sup> Day</i>	3 <i>Frederick 2<sup>nd</sup> Day</i>	4 <i>Walters 1<sup>st</sup> Day</i>	5 <i>Walters 2<sup>nd</sup> Day</i>	6 <i>Cache 1<sup>st</sup> Day</i>	7
8	9 <i>Cache 2<sup>nd</sup> Day</i>	10 <i>Cache 3<sup>rd</sup> Day</i>	11 <i>Cache 4<sup>th</sup> Day</i>	12 <i>Lawton 1<sup>st</sup> Day</i>	13 <i>Lawton 2<sup>nd</sup> Day</i>	14 
15	16 <i>CLOSED Presidents' Day</i>	17 <i>Lawton 3<sup>rd</sup> Day</i>	18 <i>Lawton 4<sup>th</sup> Day</i>	19 <i>Lawton 5<sup>th</sup> Day</i>	20 <i>TRUCK DAY</i>	21
22	23 <i>Make-Up Day</i>	24 <i>Make-Up Day</i>	25 <i>Inventory</i>	26 <i>Inventory</i>	27 <i>Inventory</i>	28

**Mini Recipe of the Month:**

**Heart Mini Pizzas**

Are you looking for an easy meal idea the whole family can enjoy? These Heart Mini Pizzas are quick, fun to make and perfect for February.

**Directions**

1. Preheat oven to 375\*.
2. Flatten dough pieces and shape into hearts.
3. Add sauce, cheese and toppings.
4. Bake 10-12 minutes or until golden brown.
5. Let cool 2 minutes and serve.

**Fun Fact**

**Did You Know?**  
Honey is one of the only foods that can last for years when stored properly.

**DIVORCE?**

**WRITS?**

**WILLS/CODICILS?**  
**ATTESTATIONS?**

**Notary Services**

packets/citations typed and prepared for Native Americans for issuance through BIA Court of Indian Offenses.  
(Additional BIA filing fees due at time of documentation)  
**REASONABLE PREP FEES**  
Contact: Jewell Laurenzana Tieyah  
(580) 678-2052 or (580) 492-5455

**Ingredients**

- 1 Can refrigerated biscuit dough (or pizza dough)
- Pizza sauce
- Mozzarella cheese
- Pepperoni (or toppings of choice)
- Italian seasoning (optional)

**Tips:** Make it a family activity - everyone can create their own pizza!

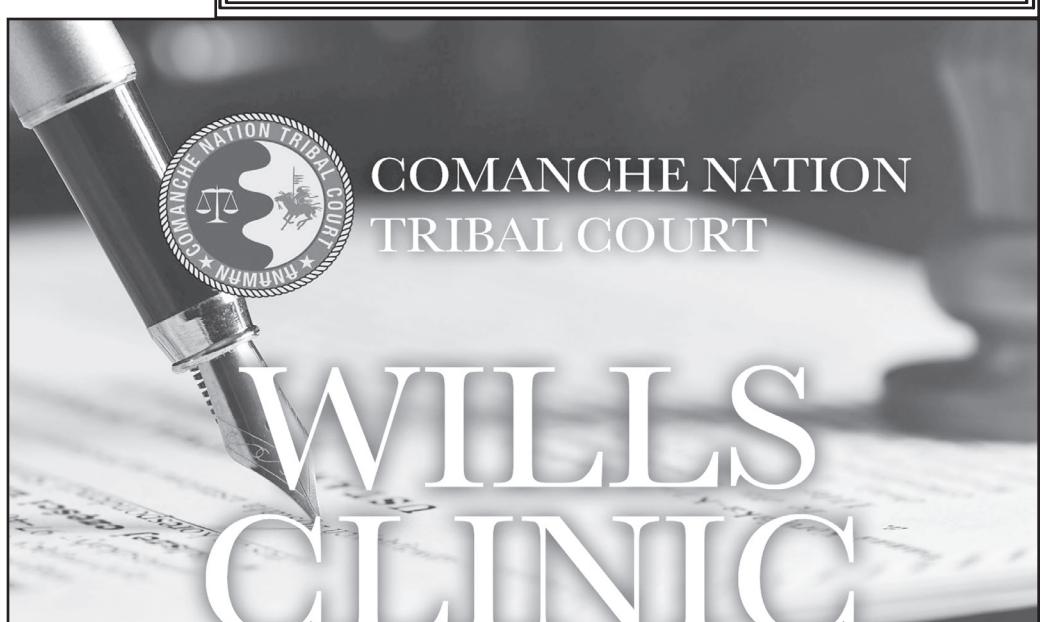
**Kitchen Tip of the Month**

To keep brown sugar soft longer, place a slice of bread in the container and seal tightly.

COMANCHE NATION LANGUAGE PROGRAM WORD SEARCH  
ANSWERS ON PAGE 13



THURAPʉ (SWEETHEART) NAISAPʉ (FLIRTING)  
KAMAKʉTʉ (LOVE) MUHRAI (KISS)  
PIHI (HEART) KWABA (HUG)  
TUPIHNA (CHOCOLATE) TOTSIYAA (FLOWER)



February 20, 2026  
10am-2pm

Comanche Nation Tribal Courthouse  
Comanche Nation Headquarters  
584 NW Bingo Road  
Lawton, OK

For more information please call (580)360-0618



COMANCHE NATION  
ENTERTAINMENT

ComancheNationEntertainment.com

# WE LOVE BIG WINNERS!

## DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS

FEBRUARY 6-28 • 7PM-11PM

DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES  
TO PLAY OUR FUN, EXCITING  
PLINKO GAME AND WIN \$100-  
\$1,000 COMANCHE CREDIT!



CHEERS TO  
23 Years  
OF  
COMANCHE RED RIVER  
HOTEL CASINO!

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS

FEB 6-28 • 7PM-11PM

DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES FEB 6-20, 27 & 28  
FROM 7PM-10:30PM TO WIN \$230 IN COMANCHE CREDIT.  
11PM DRAWING WINNERS RECEIVE \$2,300 CASH!  
FEB 21 • 7PM-11PM

DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES TO WIN \$2,300 CASH  
and from 11AM-11PM pick up an Anniversary T-Shirt for 23 points!



## CUPID'S CASH & CHOCOLATE

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS  
FEB 6-28 • NOON-MIDNIGHT

EARN 50 POINTS AND SWIPE BETWEEN NOON-8PM TO  
WIN \$50-\$150 COMANCHE CREDIT & A CHOCOLATE BAR!  
DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES FROM 8PM-MIDNIGHT  
TO WIN \$100-\$200 COMANCHE CREDIT OR \$1,000 CASH!



## FEBRUARY WINNING WEEKENDS

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS  
FEB 6-27 • 7PM-11PM

DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES  
TO WIN \$50-\$150 COMANCHE CREDIT  
OR \$200 CASH!



COMANCHE  
CACHE CASINO'S  
ONE YEAR  
OF WINNING

THURSDAY  
FEB 12 • NOON-8PM



HOT SEAT DRAWINGS EVERY 30 MINUTES.  
TWO LUCKY WINNERS WILL WIN  
\$100-\$500 COMANCHE CREDIT!

GET YOUR RAFFLE TICKETS AT 3PM FOR A CHANCE TO WIN  
\$100 WAHLBURGERS GIFT CARDS AT 6PM!

FREE MENU TASTING AND  
MEET & GREET WITH CHEF PAUL AT 5PM!

Must sign up for this event.  
wahlburgers



# Comanche Athletes Compete in the Caddo County Basketball Tournament

Tournament Took Place January 19-24 in Anadarko and Apache, Oklahoma

Photos by Stacey Heminoky/News Staff



Congratulations to Comanche tribal member, Khloe Goombi, and the Cyril Lady Pirates on being the 2026 Back-to Back Caddo County Tournament Champions!



Congratulations to Comanche tribal member, Khloe Goombi, 2026 Back-to-Back Champ!



2026 3rd Place Caddo County Tournament, Boone-Apache Lady Warriors!



Congratulations to Comanche tribal members, Jyla Tieyah (Jr.), Breanna Howlingwater (Sr.) and Neveah Smith (Jr.) from Boone-Apache who helped get their team 3rd place.



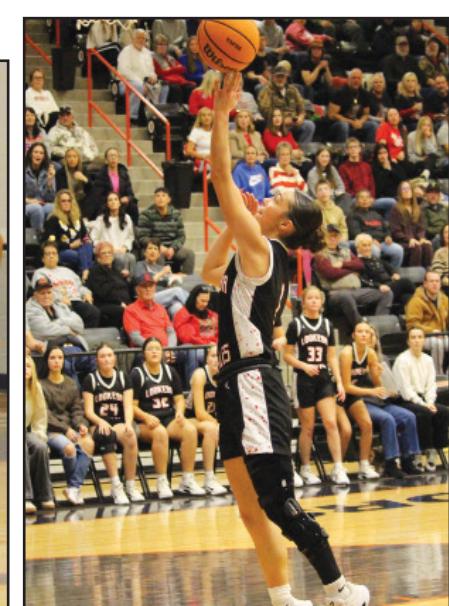
2026 Caddo County All-Tournament Team. Left to right; Rowyn Fite, Sr. at Lookeba-Sickles High and Khloe Goombi, Jr. at Cyril High School.



2026 Caddo County Tournament Consolation Winners, Fort Cobb-Broxton Lady Mustangs.



Congratulations to Comanche tribal members, Lania (Sr.) and Lamiah Tselee (So.) both from Fort Cobb-Broxton who helped get their team the Consolation trophy.





# Comanche County Schools Compete in Annual Comanche County Basketball Tournament

Photos by Natascha Mercadante/ News Staff



Chattanooga Lady Warriors take home first place.



Chattanooga Warriors take home first place.



Indiana's Isabela Ramirez dribbles at center court.



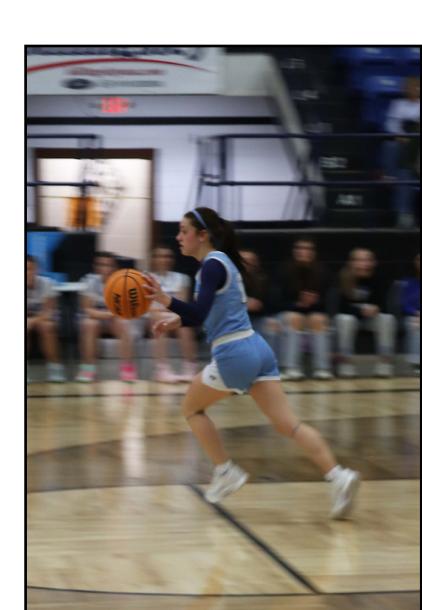
Sterling Lady Tiger Ayanna Mithlo attempts a three point shot.



Geronimo Blue Jay Dayson Gomez shoots a free throw.



Chattanooga Warrior Evan Wauqua attempts a layup.



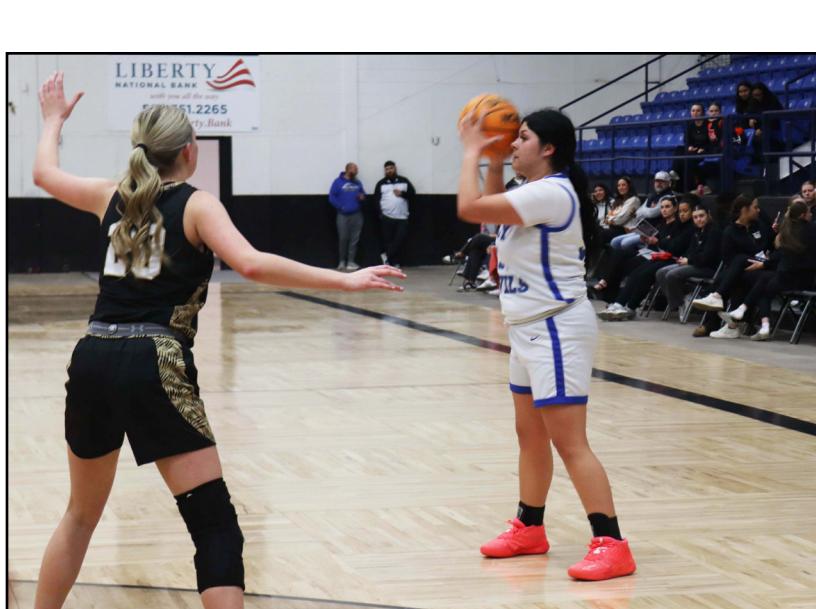
Geronimo Lady Blue Jay Abbey Huffman begins an offensive play.



Big Pasture's Gracie Tahpay shakes hands after her game against Geronimo.



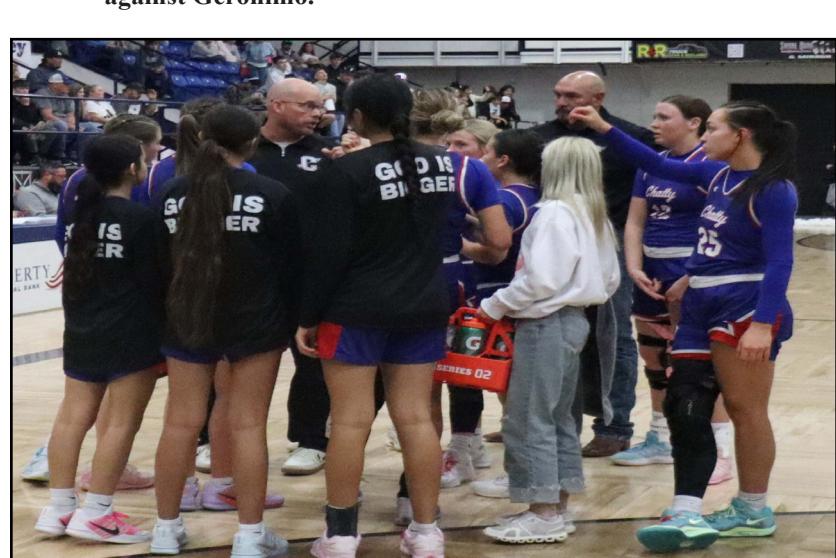
Walters Blue Devil Jermiah Chasenah shoots a free throw.



Walters Lady Blue Devil JT Aguilera attempts to pass the ball against Tipton Tigers.



Indiana's Kayden Richardson and Hadley Zollars guard goal.



Maddie Koweno and Chattanooga Lady Warriors break at time-out.



Kenslee Griffin cheers on Fletcher.



Indiana's Laila Tissichy shoots a free throw.



Kelton Sutherland plays for Walters.



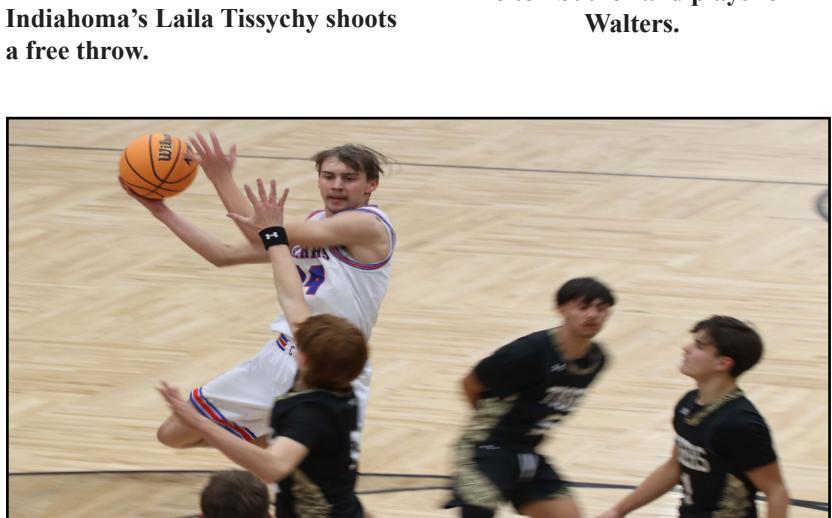
Walters Blue Devil Trevin Reed shoots a three pointer.



Indiana's Tristan Locklear begins an offensive drive.



Wesley Davis plays for Sterling Tigers.



Chattanooga Warrior Owyn McCain attempts a layup.

## Geronimo Educator Receives Comanche County Hall of Fame Award at Basketball Tournament

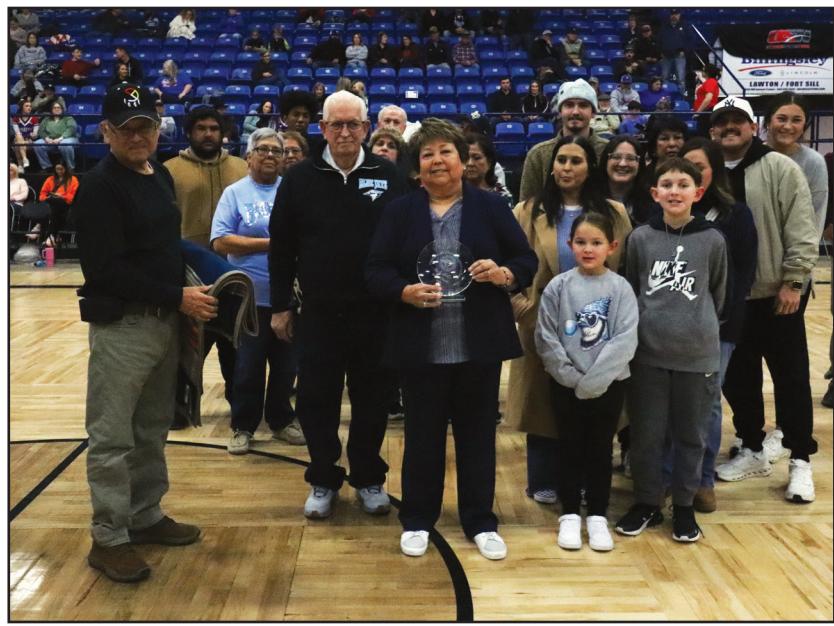
By Natascha Mercadante/News Staff

Comanche tribal member Paula Mallow is a counselor for junior high and high school students at Geronimo High School. She has worked in education for 42 years.

She received Comanche County Hall of Fame Award on February 22 at Great Plains Coliseum.

Right after Mallow graduated from college, she began at Temple Public Schools for three years, took a year off and has continued her career at Geronimo Public Schools.

"What I have now is my most important role is counseling with the students, trying to help them out. I think since COVID took place, it sort of messed with everyone's minds," Mallow said. "And I think that's why mental health is such a big issue right now...because of that seclusion it put us in, that keeping us out of society for those months, and it really hurt the students. But as a counselor, I want to come in, and



Natascha Mercadante/News Staff

Paula Mallow receives Comanche County Educator Hall of Fame Award on February 22 at Great Plains Coliseum. She has served as an educator for over 40 years and is a counselor to students at Geronimo Junior High and High School. Mallow said she wants to help guide students and expand their horizons. Mallow was joined by her family.

my main goal is to try to help the students."

She said she always wanted to be an educator, but her family was

unsure if they were able to afford it due large family size.

"I have eight brothers and sisters who come from the Stony

Point area," Mallow said. "But just seeing the things that I have gone through and what I have witnessed with my own eyes, I just wanted to help kids, especially these days in time. And I think I went back and got my degree for counseling about 15 years ago. And I love it."

She said a driving factor of her job is the students.

"It's just always been important to me because...[the] kids, just knowing, wanting them to believe in themselves, to have that self-confidence that they can become anything that they want to be," Mallow said. "Education just helps the students go further in life and help them to realize that they can. Education is important to me to try to let the students of Geronimo know that there's a world out there."

She also invites alumni of Geronimo schools who are in HVAC, electricians, business owners, dental assistants, EMTs and other occupations to a career fair.

"I just want to see them become successful and just broaden

their horizons. And I know a lot of their personal lives. And so, I just want them to see that the doors will open and what's out there," Mallow said.

She has several jobs around Geronimo, including reporting, testing and wherever else she may be needed.

This is the first year the award was given to educators in the southwest Oklahoma area and was supported by several superintendents.

Mallow was grateful for the award and said it made her feel appreciated and needed.

## Cache Educator Receives Comanche County Hall of Fame Award at Basketball Tournament

By Natascha Mercadante/News Staff

Sandra Chesnut, a Comanche tribal member, received the Teacher's Comanche County Educator Hall of Fame Award at the Comanche County Basketball Tournament on February 22, at Great Plains Coliseum.

She has only worked for Cache Public Schools, where she was a teacher and counselor for 39 years.

Chesnut has been a member of the Oklahoma Education Association, National Education Association and State of Oklahoma Counseling Educators. She was also on the state's textbook committee, helping determine which books teachers wanted to use in class.

Chesnut said her family pushed for a college education, and she earned a business degree from Southwestern Oklahoma State University in Weatherford and a master's in counseling from The University of Oklahoma in Norman.



Natascha Mercadante/News Staff

Sandra Chesnut receives Comanche County Educator Hall of Fame Award on February 22 at Great Plains Coliseum. She taught several different classes at Cache Public Schools and was a counselor for over 39 years. Chesnut said watching students become successful was her favorite part about her job.

"So, I was in the field of education, both in my undergrad and my graduate degree, and I loved it.

You know, I love people. I love the socialness of meeting people, talking to people, feeling like I could help

somebody," she said. "And that was the thing that I enjoyed the most... every day I saw somebody I could help. And I really felt like I played a key role within our school because I'm Native American. And at that time, we were 33 percent Native American at Cache."

Chesnut received a call from the superintendent at the time asking if she wanted to take a business job, and the rest was history.

"While I was at Cache, I did go through...5 superintendents and they were all different in their personalities, and they stayed there 5, 10 years, you know, each of them," she said. "They were great contributors to where our school is today. Our school is so much different. You know, everybody knew one another, but it was a lot of perennial families within the community that had been raised there all their lives...school was their thing. They were proud of it...their school, their students started kindergarten, they graduated there..."

and it's changed."

As a counselor, Chesnut wanted to see students succeed, which was also her favorite part; knowing she helped touch the lives of students.

"When I counsel seniors, I would just say, get in a career that's going to give you some retirement," she said. "You can't live off of Social Security, you know, and make yourself proud and make your family proud."

Chesnut said there were students from a variety of backgrounds, including the military, industry, Goodyear and transfers.

She taught a variety of classes and won the school's first academic State award.

Chestnut comes from a large family, is a descendant of Quanah Parker, and is currently retired and serves on the Comanche Nation Election Board.



## Vote Arlene Schonchin

Candidate 2026 Comanche Nation Princess

- \* 16-Years-Old and a Junior at Elgin High School
- \* From the Wockmetooah, Tomahsah - Pratt Families
- \* From the Kwaharu & Yapharuhka Bands
- \* Descendant of Chiefs Wildhorse & Whitewolf
- \* Raised in the Powwow Arena
- \* Member of the National Honor Society
- \* Former Princess for the American Indian Catholic Outreach, CIVA, Comanche Nation Jr. Princess and Comanche Little Ponies

"I would love the opportunity to serve the Comanche Nation as the 2026 Comanche Nation Princess. I appreciate your support and vote on April 3-4, 2026. URA"



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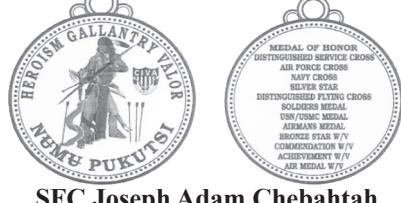
# Military News

Submitted by Kevin Pohawpatchoko/Comanche Indian Veterans Association (CIVA) Vice Commander

## Joseph Adam Chebahtah Pukutsi No. 31



Courtesy Photo



SFC Joseph Adam Chebahtah

There was once a very elite group of Contrary Warriors among the Comanches called Pukutsi (aka as Crazy Dog Soldiers by Blackbear Bosin). The Pukutsi was brave to the extreme point beyond the foolhardy stage. The origin of the Pukutsi is obscure and the idea behind the behavior of these fearless Warriors was handed down orally by our elders. Any man brave enough and desiring to do so could become a Pukutsi. No one ever bothered a Pukutsi because he was so recklessly brave. He wore a long sash around his waist and in battle he rolled out his sash, struck the free end into the ground with an arrow and took his stand. He stood tethered by his sash until victory was won or death took him. A Pukutsi was afraid of nothing. There are not many men such as these among the Comanches. Now 31 Comanche Veterans have been decorated for Gallantry, Heroism, Valor or Bravery or fought and killed the enemy in Hand-to-Hand fighting on the battlefield.

Army Sergeant First Class (Retired) Joseph Chebahtah was born at Eglin Air Force Base in Pensacola, FL in 1967. His parents are Joe and Linda Chebahtah of Lawton, OK. He enlisted in the Army and served on active duty from 1985-93. SFC Chebahtah completed Basic Training at Fort Stewart, GA, Advanced Individual Training at Fort Gordon, GA and Airborne School at Fort Benning, GA. He then served with the 75th Infantry Battalion and 197th Infantry Brigade at Fort Benning, 2nd Infantry Division in Korea and 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, NC. From 1993-2015 he was a member of the 105th Engineer Battalion of the North Carolina Army National Guard as a Combat Engineer. He deployed to Iraq twice, in 2004-05 (for 12 months) and 2007-08 (for 9 months) and to Afghanistan from 2010-11 (for 9 months). He served as an Active Guard Reservist since 2006.

On 11 April 2008, while in Iraq, he was awarded the Army Commendation medal with/Valor Device for valor. His citation reads in part "For Valor on 11 April 2008, SFC Chebahtah led his vehicle into an attack involving direct small arms fire and indirect fire in order to provide gun coverage as well as a physical shield for personnel dismounted to recover an immobilized vehicle with its driver still inside. Once dismounted he secured the vehicle for recovery and provided security for the other soldiers. His decisive actions on the ground, while under fire, undoubtedly deceased his soldiers exposure thus saving lives." The citation was signed by Jeffery W. Talley, Brigadier General, US Army, Commanding. SFC Chebahtah is given the honorary title of Numu Pukutsi for his actions of valor.

His awards include the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service, Army Commendation w/V and 3 Oak Leaf Cluster, (OLC), Army Achievement w/OLC, Reserve Component Achievement w/3 OLC, Good Conduct, National Defense Service w/Star, Korean Defense Service, Humanitarian Service, Global War on Terrorism Service and Expedition-

ary, Iraq Campaign w/Service Star, Afghanistan w/2 Service Stars and NATO medals, the NCO Professional Development w/Numerical 3, Army Service and Overseas w/Numerical 4 ribbons, the Meritorious Unit Citation, the Combat Action Badge (CAB) w/Star and Parachutist Badges. SFC Chebahtah is only Comanche veteran awarded the Combat Action Badge twice – ten other Comanches have earned the CAB. He is also one of only thirty-five Comanche veterans Paratroopers.

CIVA Officer's, Veterans and Princess would like to thank SFC Chebahtah for his service to God and Country.



Combat Action Badge with/Star

## Funeral and Honor Guard Detail

On December 30, 2025, a Funeral and Honor Guard Detail was requested by Comanche Nation Funeral Home on behalf of US Army Veteran Mathew David Isaac. During the Funeral Services, Specialist E-4 Isaac's military biography was read and afterward Veterans in attendance performed a Final Salute. The Honor Details consisted of representatives from the US Army along with CIVA Veterans and Auxiliary members. The U.S., Comanche Nation, Oklahoma, US Army, CIVA flags were displayed. SPC Isaac is the son of CIVA Auxiliary member Beverly Isaac.

## In Honor and Memory



Courtesy Photo

### U.S. Army Veteran Mathew David Isaac

Specialist E-4 Mathew David Isaac, served in the US Army from (28 JAN 00 to 27 JAN 003) and completed his US Army Reserve obligation on (30 NOV 07) earning the rank of Specialist E-4. SPC Mathew David Isaac's last duty assignment was with Battery B, 155th Self-Propelled Battalion, FORCOM. SPC Isaac served as a Field Artillery Turret Mechanic. His awards include the Army Achievement Medal (two awards), National Defense Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon and Marksmanship Qualification Badge with Grenade Bar and completed Combat Lifesaver Course. The Comanche Indian Veterans Association would like to thank US Army SPC Mathew David Isaac for his dedicated service to God and Country.

## Funeral and Honor Guard Detail

On January 2, a Funeral and Honor Guard Detail was requested by Comanche Nation Funeral Home and the Tippeconnic Family on behalf of US Navy Veteran Norman Tippeconnic. During the Funeral Services, Petty Officer Second Class Norman Tippeconnic's flag was folded after playing of Taps by US Navy personnel and presented. His military biography was read and afterwards Veterans in attendance performed a Final Salute. The Honor Details consisted of representatives from the US Navy along with CIVA Veterans and Auxiliary members. The U.S., Comanche Nation, Oklahoma, US Navy, CIVA flags were displayed.

## Calling For All Former CIVA Princesses

To all the former CIVA Princesses, please contact CIVA Auxiliary member Linda Tehauno at (580) 678-2468 or by email [veloiswhitefeather@yahoo.com](mailto:veloiswhitefeather@yahoo.com). CIVA is planning a 50th Anniversary event as we are extending an invitation to you.



Courtesy Photo

### Petty Officer Second Class Norman Tippeconnic

Navy 1953-57

Tippeconnic was born at White River, AZ on the White Mountain Apache reservation in 1933. He passed away on 20 December 2025 in Wagoner, Oklahoma at age 92 years. He is an enrolled member of the Comanche Nation and of Cherokee descent. Petty Officer Second Class Tippeconnic served as a Storekeeper in the US Navy from 29 January 1953 to 22 January 1957. His duty stations include Naval Technical Training Center in San Diego California, Naval Air Station Pensacola Florida. Petty Officer Second Class Tippeconnic served onboard, USS Healy (DD-672) a Fletcher-class destroyer homeport at Norfolk Naval Shipyard, Portsmouth VA. USS Healy (DD-672) deployments include the Mediterranean Sea twice, Northern Europe and local Naval Exercises off the coast of Virginia. Petty Officer Second Class Tippeconnic was awarded the Good Conduct and National Defense Service medals and the Comanche Nation Honorable Service medallion. The Comanche Indian Veterans Association would like to thank US Navy Petty Officer Second Class Norman Tippeconnic for his dedicated service to God and Country.

## CIVA Monthly Meeting

On January 8, CIVA held its monthly meeting in the Patriot Room. Prior to the meeting a Cedar Ceremony was conducted by Gene Sovo. A call to order was later conducted by Outgoing CIVA Commander Roger Tehauno as a prayer was given by CIVA Secretary Dominic Pawlowski. The Pledge of Allegiance lead by Outgoing CIVA Commander Roger Tehauno and before the serving of the evening meal, a birthday recognition was given to CIVA Associate Member James Czerniak and CIVA Auxiliary member Lisa Pawlowski. The Oath of Office was given to the Newly Elected Officer's by US Marine Corps Veteran, Comanche Business Committee Secretary/Treasurer Benny Tahmahkera. The evening meal was provided by CIVA Auxiliary members Cheryl Takawana and Betty Tippeconnic. CIVA In-coming Commander Dr. Thomas Boyt conducted the monthly meeting as old and new business was presented and discussed. Planning for CIVA 50th Anniversary was discussed and presented to the CIVA Officer's, Veterans, and Auxiliary. The CIVA Monthly Meeting ended with a closing prayer.



Courtesy Photo

### Outgoing CIVA Commander Roger Tehauno with CIVA Auxiliary Member Lisa Pawlowski and CIVA Associate member James Czerniak.



Courtesy Photo

### CBC Secretary/Treasurer performing the Swearing-In Ceremony to newly elected CIVA Officers.

CIVA Commander, Dr. Thomas Boyt is a graduate from the United States Air Force Academy class of 1973 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Life Sciences and Aerospace Engineering and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Air Force (USAF). He was designated as a Missile Launch Officer and served as a Deputy Missile Combat Crew Commander and Deputy Flight Commander with the USAF 341st

Missile Wing headquartered at Malmstrom Air Force Base, Montana. After a wonderful Air Force career, Dr. Thomas Boyt retired from the USAF and later earned his Doctorate Degree in Philosophy and Business from the University of Oklahoma, and a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Colorado State University. Dr. Thomas Boyt was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Honor.

CIVA Vice Commander Kevin Pohawpatchoko retired from the US Navy Reserve as a Quartermaster 1st Class Petty Officer. He previously served as an Officer with CIVA as a Second Vice Commander, Vice Commander, Treasure, Commander and Advisor. Kevin Pohawpatchoko participated in Operations Praying Mantis, Noble Eagle, Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. He was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Honor and serves as a Committeeman with the Oklahoma Military Hall of Honor, Treadwell-Poolaw Chapter of SW Oklahoma and is also a Life Member with the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

CIVA Secretary Dominic Pawlowski served in the US Marine Corps and the Oklahoma Army National Guard. He was re-elected to serve as the CIVA Secretary. Dominic Pawlowski was deployed to Iraq twice in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. He is an Ordained Minister and was inducted in the Oklahoma Military Hall of Honor.

CIVA Treasure Roger Tehauno is a United States Air Force Veteran and served during the Vietnam War with the 432nd Security Police Squadron at Udorn Air Base, Thailand. He previously served as the CIVA Commander, Treasurer and was elected to serve this term as Treasure.

He was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Honor and serves as a Committeeman with the Oklahoma Military Hall of Honor, Treadwell-Poolaw Chapter of SW Oklahoma.

CIVA Sgt at Arms John McClung served in the US Army and retired from the Army National Guard and previously served as Vice Commander of CIVA. He is a veteran of the Persian Gulf War. He fought in the largest land battle during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and was deployed for Operation Iraqi & Enduring Freedom. John McClung is one of three Comanche Warriors who served in three wars and was inducted in the Oklahoma Military Hall of Honor.

## Comanche Nation Veteran Information Is Needed

The Comanche Indian Veterans Association are updating the Comanche Veterans Master List. If you are a Honorably Discharged Veteran and you would like your military service updated and documented, please email Kevin Pohawpatchoko at [k\\_pohawpatchoko@yahoo.com](mailto:k_pohawpatchoko@yahoo.com). Your military service history, documents, records, photographs and your DD-214 will be forwarded to Dr. Bill Meadows, Missouri State University, Department of Sociology-Anthropology/Native American Studies. He and his staff will digitize your military documents and update our Comanche Veterans Master List. Our Comanche Veterans military history and documents received will also help in the event of a Veteran's passing. In closing, this is voluntary for the Comanche Nation Veterans and their families. Thank you!

...



Courtesy Photo

**CIVA CHRISTMAS PARTY.** On December 20, 2025, CIVA held its annual Christmas Party in the home of Major Kent and Mindy Tomah III. Prior to the meal being served, CIVA Commander Roger Tehauno thanked everyone in attendance for their dedication and hard work this past year. Major Kent Tomah opened with a few words before the meal. After the meal the CIVA Veterans and Auxiliary exchanged gifts which was enjoyed by all along with a cookie baking contest. CIVA would like to thank Major Kent and Mindy Tomah for their hospitality and for having the annual Christmas Party at their house.

## COMANCHE NATION CHILDCARE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM OVERVIEW

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

**FEDERAL FUNDED GUIDELINES**

**SERVICE AREA:** Oklahoma Counties - Caddo, Canadian, Cleveland, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Grady, Greer, Jackson, Jefferson, Kiowa, McClain, Oklahoma, Pottawatomie, Stephens, Tillman, Washita / Texas Counties - Wichita

**AGES:** Children 6 weeks - 13 years of age

**TRIBAL ENROLLMENT:** Child must be enrolled in a federally recognized tribe OR eligible for enrollment in a federally recognized tribe (e.g. descendants of any federally recognized tribe, with at least one parent/grandparent enrolled with proof of enrollment and lineage)

**ALLOWANCE:** Any amount up to the provider's established payment rates (AFTER income co-pay deduction)

**CNC FUNDED GUIDELINES**

**SERVICE AREA:** Residence outside of federal service area

**AGES:** Children 6 weeks - 13 years of age

**TRIBAL ENROLLMENT:** Child must be an enrolled Comanche tribal member OR pending enrollment (letter from enrollment department required)

**ALLOWANCE:** Up to \$500 each month, per child (AFTER income co-pay deduction)

**WHAT IS IT?**  
A subsidy program providing child care assistance to eligible Native families through Federal or CNG funding. Eligibility criteria varies by fund type.

**APPLICATION PROCESS**

TO APPLY OR RECERTIFY FOR CHILD CARE ASSISTANCE, PLEASE SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING:

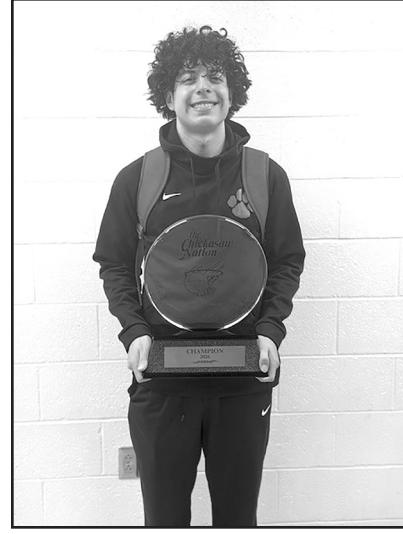
- Completed Child Care Application or Recertification Form
- Income Verification - Guardian must provide one month of recent pay stubs, class schedule if student, letter of employment if newly employed, or self-employment affidavit with documentation, and include all income sources (SSI, Disability, Child Support, etc.)
- Identification Verification - Guardian's photo ID and tribal ID & each child's tribal ID and birth certificate
- Proof of Residency - Recent utility bill or lease with applicant's name & physical address
- Signed Consent to Release Information
- Emergency Contact Information
- Provider Selection - Must be state-licensed or tribally licensed and provide all required documentation

Children with special needs, in foster care, experiencing homelessness, or in protective services may qualify for reduced or waived child care fees. Eligibility is determined by the CDFD Administrator or Co-Administrator on a case-by-case basis.

Contact Child Care Department: (580) 699-3991

[childcare@comanchenation.com](mailto:childcare@comanchenation.com)

# People, Places and Things Happening



Vilalobos



Bradley

## Tribal Youth Place in Basketball Tournaments

Comanche tribal members Kanon Bradley and Cruz Vilalobos placed in basketball tournaments during the month of January.

Bradley is a 6'3" Sophomore at Vanoss High School, in Vanoss Oklahoma. He the Slick Hills Invitational Tournament at Boone-Apache High School.

Vilalobos is a 6'1" Senior at North Rock Creek High School in Shawnee, Oklahoma, who won the East Central Oklahoma Classic Tournament.

They are both the grandkids of the late Carol Martinez Grant, Comanche Tribal Member, who holds the Comanche County Basketball Tournament record since 1973. She had 50 points in one game of the tournament and still holds the area record of 62 points in one game.



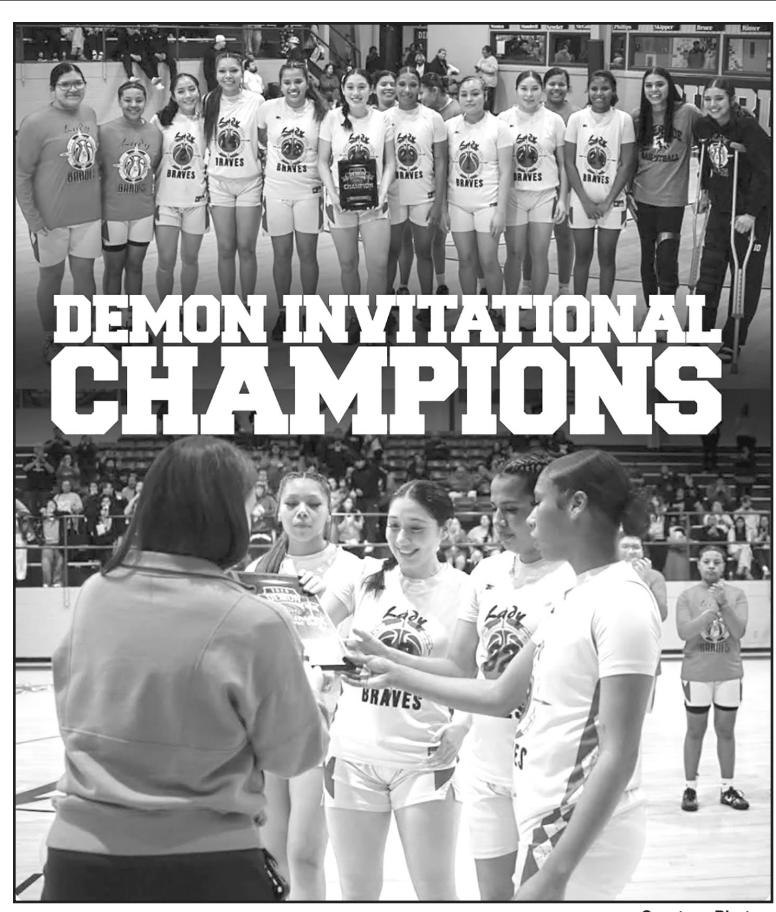
Courtesy Photos

## Remi and Koda Stumblingbear Tribal Members Place at the Bedlam Battle Wrestling Tournament

On January 10, Remi Evelyn Danell Stumblingbear, 11 years old, and Koda Victor Royce Stumblingbear, 12 years old, attended the Champion Bedlam Battle wrestling tournament held in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Remi won first place, receiving her first wrestling ring, and Koda won second place, receiving his wrestling medal.

Their parents are so proud of them in the competition.



Courtesy Photos

Congratulations to the Riverside Lady Braves, who are the 2026 Demon Invitational Champions on January 10. Riverside Indian School in Anadarko, Okla. is the oldest federally operated American Indian boarding school in the United States.

# New Business

## Business owner McKenzi Sovo is an esthetician with Glow With Sovo.



Sovo

Story and Photos by Natascha Mercadante/News Staff

McKenzi Sovo began her business in 2025 and said she's always been interested in the career since high school, and being a Comanche princess.

"It's a lot about skin care, but it also has a beauty aspect to it, so I just decided, like 'I think I'm going to go to school for it and try it out,'" Sovo said.

She offers several services.

"Waxing and then I do enjoy makeup, but it's kind of hard to get booked for that because a lot of people like to do it for special events, but I do like, I do enjoy doing makeup," Sovo said. "I do like waxing, and I also like anything that has to do with the eyebrows, and so it's like the laminations, tints, waxing, and then I would probably say lashes next and then probably facials and like really like the skin care of everything."

She does travel between Lawton and Norman due to the fact a lot of her clientele are in Lawton.

"Being one of the few estheticians in the area of Lawton, Oklahoma, it's kind of hard because,

mainly, getting my name out there," Sovo said. "Not a lot of people are on social media, so that's kind of why I carry the business cards whenever I go places. Even if it's not a powwow, it could be just like in public, and somebody may compliment me, or somebody may notice me, and I'm just like, 'Oh, here take a business card,' you know."

She said being indigenous means she understands cost can sometimes be a factor for those looking to be beautified.

"Not to say that Native Americans don't have a lot, but I know there are some families that might be struggling financially, and they want to get services done, but they can't, and sometimes I can be a little lenient with certain people, but I try not to be," Sovo said. "But my prices, I feel like, are pretty affordable for people who might not have a lot, and they just want to come get a little service done."

She said getting started was challenging, but she has utilized social media to build her business.

"It's still slow-moving right now because I'm still coming up and coming, but it was definitely getting my degree, and I'm still taking my tests as of right now," Sovo said. "I passed the first half of my tests, but I still have my written tests to take for my license. But I do have my work permit. I'm able to work, but before that, getting all of my supplies it took a minute, but finally I got majority of everything that I needed. As of right now, I don't really need anything else. It's just kind of back stock products, but other than that, like it was definitely a struggle getting the things that I needed here and there, and also gaining the clientele, but once I put myself out there, it definitely started to get a move on."

She markets herself at powwows, on social media and through signage, from Intertribal Visions, around town.

Sovo can be found on Facebook and Instagram by searching Glow With Sovo, and by calling (580) 574-2596.

# Dear TCNN

## Letters to the Editor

The family of Billy Joe Wermy would like to express and share his accomplishments with our version of how he lived his life during his 94 years on this earth.

Billy Joe Wermy 94, passed away on Saturday, December 6, 2025, in Lawton, Oklahoma. He was born to Thompson Pekah-Wermy and June Kopaddy-Wermy on September 25, 1931, in Lawton, OK he grew up in the Cache/ Indiana area and attended Fort Sill Indian School. He served in the Army from 1951 to 1953, including 12 months in Korea during the Korean War. While in Korea, he was assigned to E-Company, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division as a Squad Leader and a member of a Medium Weapons 60mm Mortar Crew. He was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, National Defense Service, Korean

Service with 3/Service Stars, Korean War Service, and United Nations Service Medals, plus Corporal Wermy's Regiment was also awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for its gallant service. In 2018, CPL Wermy received the Korean Presidential Peace medal in 2025, he was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Honor.

After leaving the Army, Billy Joe Wermy married Alice Pahoddy on May 12, 1950. They were proud full-blooded members of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma and were married for over 65 years until her passing in 2015.

He worked for the Hotel Lawtonian as an accountant for many years. He went on to work as a security guard at Ft. Sill Indian School. This line of work led him to attend the Indian Police Academy in Washington, D.C. so he could assist lo-

cal Law Enforcement agencies and the Bureau of Indian Affairs in handling land and tribal property. Billy Joe was a softball coach for many years. He took several teams to the ISC World Tournaments in Long Beach, California, Kimberley, Wisconsin, Phoenix, Arizona, the Indian Nationals in Albuquerque, NM, the ASA Tournaments in Lake Charles, LA, and the Oklahoma City Indian Tournaments for several years. If you were lucky enough to play on one of his teams, you had a good time playing and hanging out with family and friends. He once said that his favorite time was coaching softball with his loving wife Alice by his side. In his later years, he enjoyed watching Western TV shows and movies along with cheering on his favorite sports teams: Dallas Cowboys, OKC Thunder, OU Football, Texas Rangers, and

OU Softball. Yet his all-time favorite was singing and recording Comanche hymns he loved passing out his CDs to all who wanted one. Those who were lucky enough to receive a CD would later say that hearing him sing was not only enjoyable and comfortable but also inspired some to learn and sing Comanche Hymns.

He is survived by his children and their spouses, Carol Autaibo of Anadarko, Oklahoma, Billy and Carol Wermy of Apache, Oklahoma, Albert and Cheryl Wermy of Cache, Oklahoma, Harold and Beverly Wermy of Cache, Oklahoma, and Ethel Boyden of Hawthorne, California. Special sons and daughter, Willie Pekah of Cyril, Oklahoma, Edward Tahah of Lawton, Oklahoma, Ethel Katvala of Indiana, Oklahoma, 12-grandchildren- Lavert, Marla, Shawn, BJ, Matt, Tiffany, Charles,

Harold, Timmy, Lesley, Tamara, and Ashlee, 20 great-grandchildren, 20 great-great-grandchildren, many nieces, nephews and cousins.

He is preceded in death by his wife Alice Wermy, his parents- Thompson and June Pekah-Wermy, daughter- Carol Ann Wermy, special son Gene Pekah, brothers and sister- Marvin Wermy, Mada Daukei, Benny Wermy, Charles Wermy and son-in-law Marty Autaibo.

To all those who knew and loved our father, grandfather, uncle or dear friend- Billy Joe Wermy, the family would like to say thank you for being a part of his life.

**Ethel Boyden**

# Milestones

## Happy Belated Birthday!

December 23 - Matt Pekah  
 January 4 - Johnnie Shae  
 Bunnie Romo  
 January 12 - Jace Rodriguez  
 January 14 - Darius Karty  
 January 23 - Carmelita Red Elk Thomas



## Happy Birthday!



February 5 - Nancy Nauni  
 February 5 - Alisha Pewewardy  
 February 5 - Timothy Tieyah Laurenzana  
 February 8 - Emilio Gomez  
 February 9 - Khloe Goombi  
 "Happy 17th Birthday!! Love, your family!!"   
 February 10 - Tiana RS Romo McClung  
 February 11 - Ramona Laurenzana Bledsoe  
 February 13 - Marques Karty  
 February 14 - Dennis Karty  
 "Happy Birthday from, Autumn and Summer Karty"  
 February 15 - LaDonna Harris  
 February 19 - Sophia Spear  
 "Happy 18th Birthday Sophia. From Mom and siblings."  
 February 24 - Edwin Akone-to  
 February 24 - Norman "Sonny" Nauni, Jr.  
 February 27 - Alexander Joseph Niyah  
 February - Marie Chebah-tah  
 "Happy 83rd Birthday! We love you!! From, Ann Quis Quis and Amber Mullins."



Happy 14th Birthday  
 Tiana RS Romo McClung  
 February 10

~ Wishing our Starr a very happy 14th birthday. From Mom, Dad, Sister, and Moo.



Happy 9th Birthday  
 Jace Rodriguez  
 January 12  
 ~ Love, your family!



In Loving Memory  
 Leona Lorene Johnson  
 Sunrise: December 24th, 1962  
 Sunset: February 9th, 2025

~ We love you & Miss you. Love, your kids & grandbabies.

The Comanche Nation News  
 March Edition  
 Deadline: February 15  
 Email: pio@comanchenation.com  
 or stacey.heminokety@comanchenation.com  
 Mail:  
 Comanche Nation/PIO  
 P.O. Box 908  
 Lawton, OK 73501  
 Contact: (580) 492-3385



Happy Birthday  
 Timothy Tieyah Laurenzana  
 February 5

~ Happy Birthday. From, Ramona, Chastity, and Maria.



Happy Birthday  
 Ramona Laurenzana Bledsoe  
 February 11

~ From Chastity and JL.



Happy Belated Birthday  
 Darius Karty  
 January 14th

## Birth Announcement CONGRATULATIONS!

Name: Naibi Marie Mullins  
 Born: January 05, 2026!!

~ Welcome to the world!



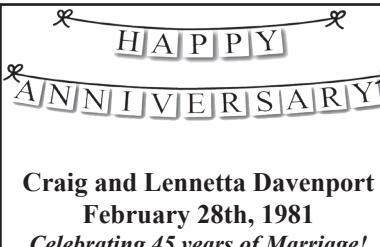
Happy Birthday  
 Marques Karty  
 February 13th  
 and  
 Alisha Pewewardy  
 February 5th



Happy 17th Birthday  
 Alexander Joseph Niyah  
 February 27



Happy Belated 90th Birthday  
 Carmelita Red Elk Thomas  
 January 23rd  
 ~ Happy 90th Birthday! Married 65 years, 4 Daughters, 4 Son-In-Laws, 16 Grandchildren and 3 Great Grandchildren. Still Going Strong!



Happy Birthday  
 Emilio Gomez  
 February 8



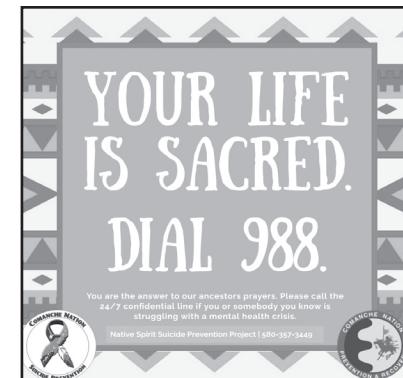
Happy Belated 6th Birthday  
 Johnnie Shae Bunnie Romo

January 4

~ Wishing our Bunnie a very happy 6th birthday. From Mom, Dad, sister and Moo.



Butch and Linda Tahsequah  
 February 6th  
 Celebrating 60 years of Marriage!

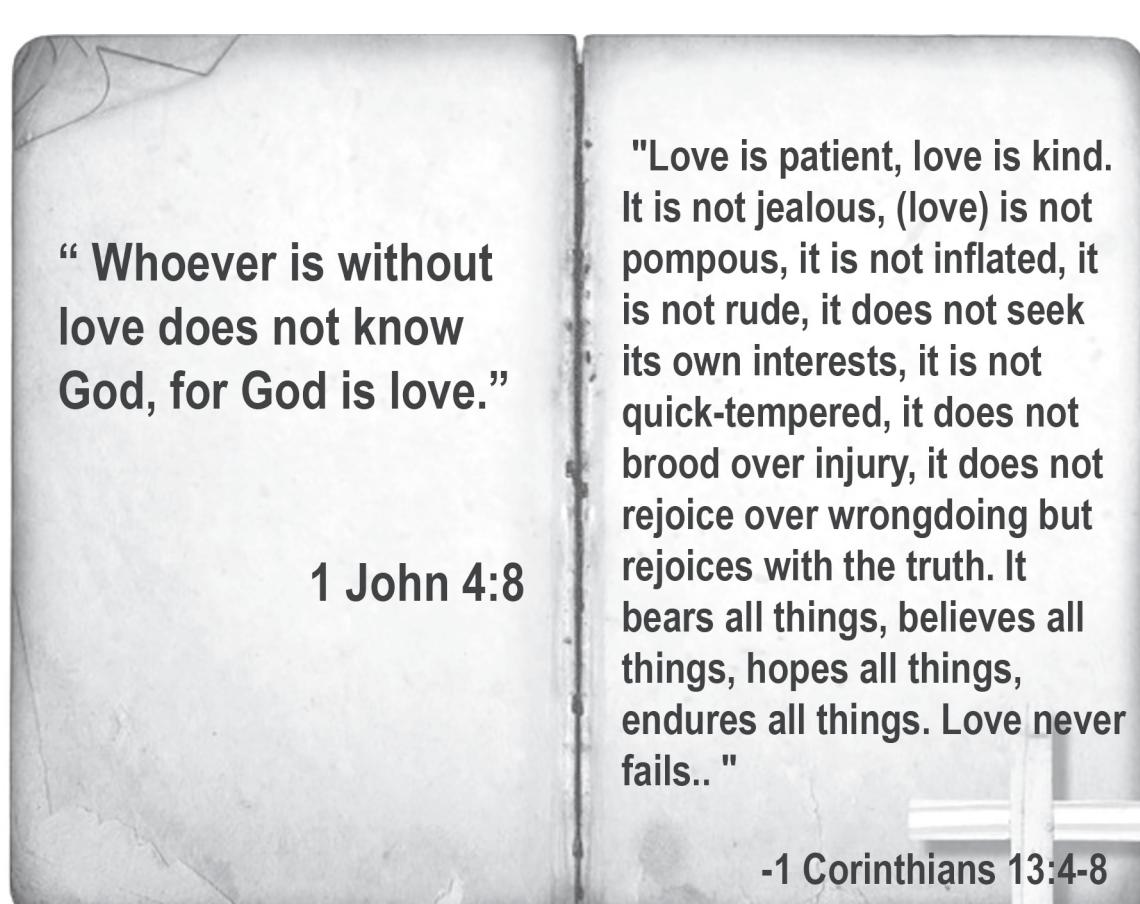


YOUR LIFE  
 IS SACRED.  
 DIAL 988.

You are the answer to our ancestors' prayers. Please call the 24/7 confidential line if you or somebody you know is struggling with a mental health crisis.

Native Spirit Suicide Prevention Project 1-800-357-3449

COMANCHE NATION  
 NATIVE SPIRIT SUICIDE PREVENTION PROJECT

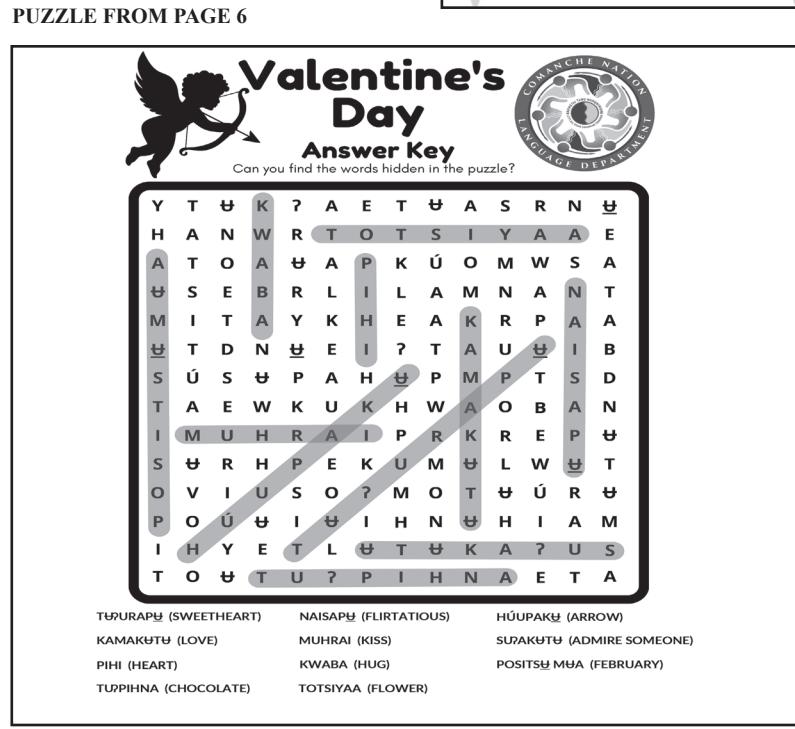


"Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love."

1 John 4:8

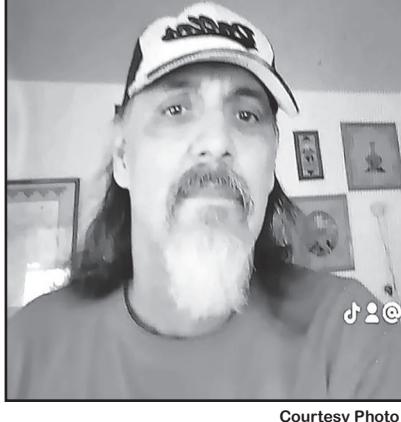
-1 Corinthians 13:4-8

COMANCHE NATION LANGUAGE PROGRAM WORD SEARCH PUZZLE FROM PAGE 6



# Obituaries

## Dallas Frank Driskill



Courtesy Photo

### Driskill

Dallas Frank Driskill, 65, of Oklahoma City, OK, passed away on August 17, 2025, surrounded by loved ones.

Driskill worked for many years as a skilled welder and found joy in woodworking, a craft he pursued with creativity and care. He will be remembered for his quiet strength and hard work.

Driskill is survived by his mother, Iverine Currier; his sisters: Valorie Hamilton, Vivian Henderson, and Bernie Currier; his daughter: Ray Post; and many beloved nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Driskill was preceded in death by his father: Billy Driskill; his stepfather: George Currier; his maternal grandparents: Herman and Alice Laurenzana.

Driskill will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered.

## Norman Weeks Tippeconnic, Sr.



Courtesy Photo

### Tippeconnic, Sr.

Norman Weeks Tippeconnic, Sr. went to his heavenly home on December 20, 2025. Tippeconnic, Sr., was a proud member of the Comanche Nation and was the oldest surviving child of John William Tippeconnic Sr. (Comanche) and Juanita Tippeconnic (Cherokee).

Tippeconnic, Sr., was born on August 24, 1933, in Whiteriver, Arizona, on the Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Prior to Tippeconnic's genesis, John and Juanita Tippeconnic laid to rest John Tippeconnic Jr. shortly after birth. Norman's ninety-two-year run had a precarious beginning. He was born two months premature and without fingernails, eyelashes, or eyebrows. Lacking the equipment to sustain his body temperature, the Indian Health Service heated bricks in an oven and placed them underneath the swaddled infant for several harrowing days. He nearly perished. However, the inner strength, fortitude, and blood built by centuries of Native resilience flowed through his veins, and he not only lived he thrived and enriched the lives of others for parts of eleven decades. Around 1854, a Comanche woman named *Ho-Yah-Wert-te-ah* and her husband, *Wau-ny-eo-how-pith*, gave birth to a son who was known as *To-Wick-Ah* until after the Red River War, when he received the name Tippeconnic (Rock House). He was named after the building of his confinement as a prisoner of war—the Old Post Guard House at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Tippeconnic and his wife, Wimnerchy, had a son named John Tippeconnic in 1901. John Tippeconnic Sr. married Juanita Ghormley on June 2, 1927. Norman Tippeconnic Sr. was their oldest surviving child. Norman lived among diverse Native populations his entire life due to his parents' employment, as well as his own. He was born on the Fort Apache Reservation in Arizona and, following a move to another part of the state, started school in a one-room schoolhouse on the Hualapai Reservation. Following his parents' move to Oklahoma, he lived on his grandfather's allotted land

outside of Cache, Oklahoma, where he attended school with other Comanche children. When World War II began, he moved to Oklahoma City, where his father took employment in the defense industry. Following the war, he moved back to the "home place" (allotted land) outside Cache and continued school. By the beginning of his eighth-grade year, his family moved to Mexican Springs, New Mexico, on the Navajo Reservation. Norman then attended high school at the Navajo Methodist Mission in Farmington, New Mexico, before attending Oklahoma A&M University.

Norman Weeks Tippeconnic Sr. served in the United States Navy from January 29, 1953, to January 22, 1957, including training at the Naval Training Center in San Diego, California, and tours of duty at the Pensacola Naval Air Station in Florida and in Norfolk, Virginia, aboard the destroyer-class USS Healy (DD-672). He was deployed to the Mediterranean on two occasions, as well as to Northern Europe, where he met a young Danish woman in Copenhagen, Denmark. They corresponded daily for eight months, and following an honorable discharge and receipt of the Good Conduct Medal and the National Defense Service Medal, Norman returned to Valby, Denmark, and married Kirsten Christensen on February 16, 1957, in a service carried out in a language he did not understand. Kirsten Tippeconnic remained his wife and partner until his recent passing. They were married for 68 years and would have celebrated their 69th anniversary on February 16, 2026.

Tippeconnic Sr. retired after thirty years of service with the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which included stints in the Gallup Area Office, the Job Corps Center in Mescalero, New Mexico, and as the Contract Officer for the Indian Affairs Data Center in Nome, Alaska. Additionally, he served as Superintendent of the BIA in Hoopa, California, and San Carlos, Arizona, and worked in the BIA Regional Office in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He also worked as a consultant with various Native Nations and Native-serving institutions, including the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Throughout his thirty years of service with the BIA, Norman—like his father—served as a cultural broker. In an era when the BIA is often depicted in a negative light, Norman was known for demanding Indian preference when involved in hiring contractors and procuring services, including the construction of schools on reservation lands. In addition to educational projects, Norman's responsibilities ranged from large-scale building projects to tribal economic development initiatives.

Tippeconnic's faith in God was the foundation of his life. He and his wife began their Christian journey in 1959 at the Baptist Indian Mission in Gallup, New Mexico. Throughout the years, he faithfully served as a deacon in each church he was a member of, living out his beliefs through service and care for others. Many of his most cherished relationships were formed within the church community and remained an enduring source of strength and fellowship throughout his life. Norman quite literally never met a stranger. He would talk with anyone. He was a kind and generous individual who never said no to anyone who asked for help. His everyman personality endeared him to all, regardless of age or status, and his legacy of love and compassion lives on through his greatest legacy—his family.

Tippeconnic Sr. is survived by his younger brother, John Tippeconnic III, and his younger sister, Mary Jo Tippeconnic Fox. He was preceded in death by his younger siblings: John Tippeconnic Jr., Robert Bruce Tippeconnic, Thomas Richard Tippeconnic, David James Tippeconnic, and Joan Marie Tippeconnic. Norman is survived by his children: Linda Ann Tippeconnic, Norman William Tippeconnic Jr., Charles Edward Tippeconnic, Annette Elizabeth Tippeconnic, Eric Tippeconnic, Freda Kathryn Tippeconnic, Janet Laura Tippeconnic, and Carol Suzanne Hartman. He is also survived by his grandchildren: Shane Thomas Tippeconnic, Jesse Tyler Tippeconnic, Jennifer Ruth Tippeconnic, Marc Cosen, Tiffany Cosen, Derek Reynolds Tippeconnic, Emeri Anne

Tippeconnic, Adam Thompson, Blake John Tippeconnic, Jordan Morning Adams, Diesen River Gorham, Nick Adams, Lance Owen Tippeconnic, Jordan Tinsley Tippeconnic, Halle June Tippeconnic, Emma Mary Tippeconnic, Thea Nicole Tippeconnic, Zalen Hale Hartman, Ava Suzanne Hartman, and Michelle Renee Tippeconnic. Norman was preceded in death by his grandchild, Jacob Benjamin. He is survived by his great-grandchildren: Jaden Ann Tippeconnic, Thomas Glen Tippeconnic, Ryan Virgil Tippeconnic, Brandon John Lovato, Heaven Kirsten Cosen, Madison Winter Cosen, DeMarco Tippeconnic Cosen, Lozen Rose Cosen, Isabella Kathryn Tahdoahnippah Tippeconnic, Kendall Kae Tippeconnic, Jasmine Rose Tippeconnic, Adelyn Taylor Adams, Liam David James Adams, Kirsten Lee Thompson, Ellie Annette Thompson, and Xavier Adam Thompson. He is also survived by his great-greatgrandchildren: Norah Rose,

## Stuart Barr Wahnee



Courtesy Photo

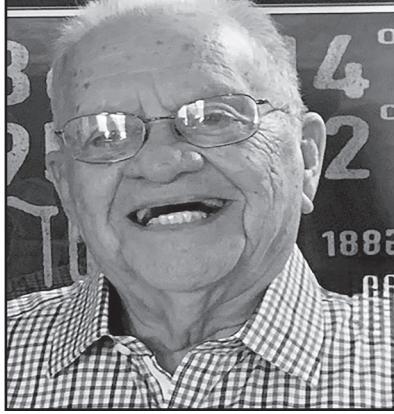
### Hayden

John David Hayden, 63, went to his heavenly home on December 15, 2025, in Lawton, Oklahoma. He was born on April 14, 1962. He was raised by his late mother Iola Hayden and the late William (Bill) Hayden. Hayden was a proud member of the Comanche Nation. Hayden worked in construction for most of his career and later earned a degree in Business from the University of Oklahoma.

An athlete in his youth, Hayden shared his passion for sports with all his children through his avid involvement in their activities such as golf, football, basketball, and baseball. Hayden's love for University of Oklahoma athletics also became a family tradition, creating many wonderful memories of attending and watching games together. His humor and intelligence will be deeply missed.

Hayden is survived by his children and their mother, Dana Deere; Billy Hayden and his children: Rae-Lynn, Maya, Mia, and Jordan; Amanda Hayden and her child: Violet; Ishie Hayden and his child: Olivia; Daniel Hayden (Amber) and their child: Meadow; and his sisters, Marcia Hayden and Sarah Morris.

## Jack Shoemate



Courtesy Photo

### Shoemate

Jack Shoemate, a distinguished public servant, proud member of the Comanche Nation, and beloved patriarch known affectionately to his family as "Taka," went to his heavenly home.

Shoemate was born to Jim and Gertrude Shoemate (née Ticeahkie). Jack was a man of incredible depth who understood the value of a meaningful life. A veteran of the U.S. Army, he served during the Korean conflict from 1954 to 1956 before embarking on a 27-year career with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Shoemate was a graduate of the Industrial Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma. His career took him from the Rocky Boy's Reservation in Montana to the State Capitol in Helena, and later to Billings, where he served as Area Credit Officer for 14 tribes. In 1981, he was selected as Superintendent of the Osage Agency

in Pawhuska. He served the Osage Nation for 13 years, notably managing the Osage Commission to bring a Constitutional form of government to the Nation.

Retirement did not slow Jack's dedication to community. He served as Director of the Pawhuska Chamber of Commerce and was elected Mayor of Pawhuska in 1997, serving three terms. As Mayor, he led a delegation to sign a Sister-City Compact with Montauban, France. Even at age 81, he remained active as President of the Osage County Historical Society.

While his professional milestones were vast, Jack's greatest accomplishment was the family he built. He overcame early life struggles not with bitterness, but by embracing life with resilience and wisdom. To the world, he was a leader who commanded respect; to his family, he was the steady presence at the kitchen table, solving crosswords. He was the architect of childhood adventures, remembered fondly for hunting golf balls and teaching his grandchildren to drive in his little white pickup truck with patience and grace.

Shoemate is preceded in death by his parents and his brothers, Bill and Jim. He leaves behind the love of his life, his wife, Dean Shoemate; their three children, Greg, Jackie, and TJ; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

He left his community better than he found it, and his family with a legacy of enduring love.

## Denise Jean Wood



Courtesy Photo

### Wood

Denise Jean Wood went to her heavenly home on January 13, 2026, in Lawton, Oklahoma, with her family by her side. She was lovingly known as "Nae-Nae" and "Diesel". Wood was a proud member of the Comanche Nation.

Wood was born to Benny Wood Jr. and Luette Codopony-Wood on December 2, 1955, at the Kiowa Indian Hospital. Wood attended school in Indiana and graduated from Indiana High School; Class of 1975. Wood was a lifelong and faithful servant of God; she was a devoted member of the Post Oak Mennonite Church.

Wood adored and cherished her family; and loved to visit and reminisce with them. She also loved to read her bible and work crosswords puzzles. Wood also enjoyed her favorite shows: Gun Smoke and Golden Girls.

Wood is survived by sisters: Glenna Chance (Jeri), Victoria Lewis-Hart (Robert), Kathy Russell (Hank), Sharon Kay Grant, Kim Cantrell, Pam Friedman (Fred), Kimmie Shipman (Randall), Marceline Carroll (Joseph), Claudie Krone (Alen), James Estes (Christy), and best friend/sister Natalie Amador.

Wood is preceded in death by her parents, grandmas Tachay, Lola Codopony, Aldean Codopony; sister and brother-in-law: Cody and Walt Sorrow; brothers: Glen Clark and Joe Sorrow; brother-in-law: Mike Grant.

Wood was a loving aunt who went by numerous titles to many nieces, nephews, and cousins.

## John Michael Palmer

PFC John Michael Palmer, a proud Kiowa, Comanche, and Choctaw man, decorated Vietnam veteran, and direct descendant of White Bear, went to his heavenly home on January 16, 2026, in Norman, Oklahoma, at the age of 78. His Kiowa name was Sait-Day, or Standing Bear.

Palmer was born on November 18, 1947, in Lawton, Oklahoma, to Wilbur Palmer and Winifred Kassavroid Palmer. Raised in the Stecker area by his father, John's young life was defined by a spirit of high adventure. Whether he was exploring the Oklahoma landscape or navigating his school



Courtesy Photo

days at Chilocco, Stecker, and Broxton, John was adventurous from the very start. He remained deeply close to his paternal grandmother, Maggie, whose influence helped shape the man of principle he became.

He and Frances Ahdunko were married in June of 1966. For nearly sixty years, they were partners in every sense of the word. Perhaps nothing captured John's spirit better than the roar of his Harley-Davidson. He loved to ride everywhere, with Frances right behind him, holding on for dear life as they blazed a trail on every road they saw. Together, they chased horizons and lived a life full of the high adventure.

In 1968, Palmer answered the call of duty and entered the United States Army. He served with distinction as a machine gunner in Company B, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, the "Golden Dragons." During his service, John was wounded in action in the Fo Noi Island area of Vietnam earning the first of two Purple Hearts.

Palmer's bravery and skill were further recognized through numerous honors, including the Combat Infantryman Badge, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, Vietnam Campaign Medal, Marksman Badge (Rifle M-14), and Sharpshooter Badge (Machine Gun M-60).

Upon returning to Oklahoma after his service, John continued to better himself and his community. He earned a bachelor's degree in environmental science from the University of Central Oklahoma. A gifted craftsman and mechanic, he shared his skills as a carpentry teacher with the Indian Action Program in Apache, Oklahoma.

Palmer was known as a man who would truly give the shirt off his back or his last thin dime to anyone in need. He was a staunch advocate for human rights and a tireless voice for his fellow veterans. A man of stout principles, his integrity and genuine nature left a lasting impact on everyone he met.

Palmer is survived by his beloved wife, Frances, of Anadarko; his children and their families: Janice Palmer of Stecker, Jolynnda Palmer and husband Alan Kaulaity of Anadarko, John Palmer Jr. "Rusty" of Ft. Cobb, Clarissa Palmer and companion Crissy Noel of Anadarko. His sister Katherine Blair and husband William Blair Jr. and family, half-sisters Debbie Palmer and Mary Ann Palmer Gomez, Erwin Dixon Palmer, and Danny Charles Palmer.

Palmer had two special adopted daughters: Jalayne "JJ" Ako-Palmer of Anadarko, and Kristen Palmer of Gracemont, along with his grandchildren, Kenzie Ako, Devin Leigh and Durell Cooper, Jasmyne, Janell, and Tyler Kaulaity.

Grandchildren: Carl and Cameron Yeahquo, Gina Meyer, Jessica Palmer Quoetone, Mario Palmer, Allen, Nicholas, Grace, Travis and Ayden Kaulaity, Mikael Thompson, Neilya Palmer, Rachael and Megan Palmer, Marcos and Mariana Bustillo.

Great Grandchildren: Chloe Cantrell, Karly and Kais Wall, Kelsey Palmer, Xzavie, Julian and Dorian Yeahquo, Vayda Aulerich, Elora Orum, Karter Westbrook, and Kinsley Kaulaity.

Palmer was preceded in death by his parents, Winifred and Wilbur Palmer; his grandmother, Maggie; an infant sister, half-sister Carolyn Palmer, brother Tommy Palmer, half-brother Ronnie Palmer, nephew William M. Blair III, and special granddaughter Amber Ako-Palmer.

## The Comanche Little Ponies Ends 2025 with a Celebration Powwow



Members of the Comanche Little Ponies gather for a photo during the 2025 New Years Celebration that took place December 27, 2025 at Watchetaker Hall.

Story and Photo by Natascha Mercadante/News Staff

On December 27, 2025, the Comanche Nation Little Ponies held a New Year's powwow at Watchetaker Hall.

Tennyson Kerchee, a Little Ponies member, said it felt amazing to be at the powwow.

"The weather, just the environment, everybody coming, like it's just something for us in the Lawton community," he said. "We always look forward to coming out here and celebrating the New Year's or coming into the New Year's, so it's always a joyous occasion."

Kerchee said the organization always looks forward to celebrating and giving back.

"Celebrating the out year, going into the New Year, even though traditionally, as Comanches, a long time ago...our New Year started in

the spring, so but now, like you know, of course, with the ongoing norms of today, so we always try to find time to celebrate a New Year," he said.

"So, with us, like the community, Lawton community, even like the surrounding tribes, like we always try to celebrate...the past New Year, going into the New Year."

Kerchee said the powwow felt special for his family.

"My youngest son, he's the head little boy, so it's a very joyous occasion, especially when your little ones are asked to be on the committee..." he said. "And so, we always try to do our best to support him, and plus my sister-in-law, she's on the head committee, so it came into almost like a double impact of joyousness...to help them celebrate."

Kerchee learned from his

grandparents that it's a way of praying.

"Even dancing...gourd dancing, and everything that goes in title...because before we start any powwow, we pray, and before we close out, we pray, so it's so for us, like it's kind of praying... we're blessed with the year that's passed... and then going into the New Year, so for us, like we're just trying to make sure that we're set...for the upcoming year coming up," he said. "So, with everybody's work...schedules, so it can be very hectic, so we just like to set time apart...and celebrate."

Their next event is the Little Ponies' annual Mother's Day powwow.



**Vanessa Tomahsah**  
Independent Beauty Consultant  
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## UPDATE YOUR DESIGNATION OF BENEFICIARY

The Beneficiary form allows for you to choose the recipient of the remaining Per Cap and/or Elders funds that are allocated to you at the time of your death.

**Who can you choose?**

- A Spouse
- Parents
- Children
- Grandchildren
- Other Relatives
- Friends
- A trust
- A charity

**What happens if you do not choose a beneficiary and you die?**

The estate law of Oklahoma will choose for you. This will lead to a delay in the payment of any outstanding allocations of per capita or elders funds to your beneficiaries.

If you have questions about who to choose, contact your legal or financial advisor for assistance. If you would like to update your beneficiary designation information, contact Per Cap Assistance at (877) 585-4177.

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### Financial Tip: Preventing Elder Abuse

**What is Elder Abuse?**  
Any act that causes harm to an older person and is carried out by someone that they trust, which is sometimes a family member or a care provider.

**How can you help your elders?**  
Keep an eye out for any unusual behaviors such as large withdrawals from their accounts, unpaid bills, or utilities that have been cut off.

**Elders you can protect yourself too!**  
Don't be afraid to ask for help if someone has taken advantage of you. Talk with a trusted family member or friend and ask them for help.

Together we can all take care of one of our greatest assets: Our Elders!



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