



## Notes from the Chief

*What I'm working on for You*

Osiyo -

Cherokee Nation's most endangered buildings teach us about the history of our people – the stories and histories of our ancestors who lived here and flourished before we were ever born. We have made a concerted effort to preserve, restore and rehabilitate our most iconic and historic places that have played key roles in Cherokee Nation's history in northeast Oklahoma. Preserving and protecting important historical elements of Cherokee Nation's heritage are important to me and to all of us as Cherokee Nation citizens, and it is a value that, as Cherokees, is deeply ingrained in each generation.

Preservation is a responsibility that we all share as citizens of our communities. It's a part of who we are. While it reflects our past, it also heralds our future. Buildings and iconic places speak to our shared roots. Our work in restoration was recently recognized by Preservation Oklahoma, a nonprofit group committed to historic preservation statewide. Just a few of our most notable projects include the following:

- We have overseen the renovation of important cultural projects, including the Cherokee National Capitol. By removing more than 2,000 old and decaying bricks and replacing them with replica bricks and mortar, it strengthened the structure while maintaining its historic look. This effort, coupled with replacing the cupola atop of the structure, has reinforced its place as Cherokee Nation's most renowned building. Originally built in 1869 and located on the main town square of Tahlequah, this building housed all three branches of Cherokee government until statehood in 1907. Soon it will be the crown jewel in the tribe's growing cluster of museums.
- We purchased Sequoyah's Cabin from the Oklahoma Historical Society when the state of Oklahoma was no longer able to operate the national historic landmark. The structure, which was built in 1829, sits on a 200-acre site and hosts more than 12,000 visitors annually. By preventing the cabin's closure, we are able to tell the story of Sequoyah through a uniquely Cherokee perspective.

· We partnered with Northeastern State University to begin work on the rehabilitation of the school's oldest and most historic building, Seminary Hall. Built in 1888 by the Cherokee Nation, it was the first female institution of higher learning west of the Mississippi River. After a renovation and repurpose by NSU, Seminary Hall will become a multipurpose building that will highlight its cultural heritage and Cherokee roots.

We owe it to our children to make these investments and conservation efforts a priority today, so that tomorrow they may better know, understand and appreciate our iconic and historic treasures in Oklahoma. As a fourth-generation Oklahoman, I know how important our preservation efforts are, and now my great-grandson, who is the seventh generation, will soon be experiencing our history and heritage.

These places are more than brick and mortar; they are places where our ancestors struggled and thrived. That spirit dwells in all of these structures, all extraordinary places that are part of the fabric of our tribe and a tribute to those who were here before us. Preserving them is worth the time and investment. It is an important responsibility, and we take great pride in ensuring it is done well for future generations.

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