



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You



Osiyo -

If you've ever been to the Cherokee National Holiday, I don't need to convince you that it's one of the most energetic and spirited weekends to spend in Tahlequah, the capital city of the Cherokee Nation. Every Labor Day weekend, the community bustles with more than 100,000 visitors moving between the Cherokee National Capitol square, the W.W. Keeler Tribal Complex, the Cherokee Heritage Center and other Cherokee Nation properties.

I am proud the Cherokee Nation annually offers our citizens and visitors such an exciting array of entertainment, cultural and athletic events. We have been perfecting one of Oklahoma's largest spectator events for the past 65 years, and the Cherokee National Holiday has something of interest for everyone. We host a wide array of educational and family-friendly options, including sporting events like softball and a youth fishing derby. Music will be abundant, with a choir singing and a fiddlers contest. We will be displaying fine arts and crafts by renowned Cherokee artisans, and we will again have a parade with floats, classic cars and marching bands through Tahlequah's historic downtown before the annual State of the Nation Address. The evening and nights are highlighted by one of the largest contest powwows in the country, with hundreds of traditional dancers and multiple drum groups.

The Cherokee National Holiday was first held in 1953 to commemorate the anniversary of the signing of the 1839 Cherokee Constitution. Many people expect the Cherokee National Holiday to offer a glimpse of traditional Cherokee life, and they are never disappointed. Artists still use ancient imagery in their works, marbles players keep score in a game that has been going on for centuries, and storytellers continue to share old tales of heroes and tricksters. Each activity is a testimony to our Cherokee ways and values.

However, it is also a time to see the modern Cherokee Nation, including the expansion and

beautification efforts at the tribal complex, the state-of-the-art Veterans Center, and the renovation and preservation efforts of our historic sites and museums. Since we last gathered a year ago, Cherokee Nation has achieved a multitude of accomplishments. We broke ground on the W.W. Hastings expansion, which will soon be the largest and most advanced American Indian health facility in the United States. We have created unprecedented job and economic opportunities, and our tribe's imprint on the Oklahoma economy has grown to more than \$2 billion annually.

As we honor our heritage and culture, we know Cherokee National Holiday is about coming home for many attendees. Our friends and family return home to celebrate and reconnect in many meaningful ways. Special thanks must be given to the hundreds of Cherokee Nation employees and volunteers who work hard to ensure this annual homecoming remains a remarkable experience. We are blessed as a tribal nation, and we look forward to sharing our culture and values with you over Labor Day.

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