

NOV 2025

THE SHAWNEE JOURNAL



PSEKFIKISFWA
"deer month"

YA'SASILAWIIYAKWE

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DEC 1 MONTHLY BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING
MIAMI, OK

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DEC 6 SLIP WINTER STORIES GATHERING
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DEC 8 TRIBAL COUNCIL CHAMBERS BUILDING DEDICATION & RIBBON-CUTTING
29 A STREET, MIAMI, OK, 74354 - 3:00PM

DEC 21 WINTER SOLSTICE

DEC 24-26 TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF CHRISTMAS

JAN 1 TRIBAL OFFICES CLOSED IN OBSERVANCE OF NEW YEAR'S DAY

JAN 5 MONTHLY BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING
MIAMI, OK

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FEB 1 DEADLINE: HIGHER EDUCATION AWARDS WINTER/SPRING TERM
FOR COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY APPLICANTS. VO-TECH STUDENTS MAY APPLY ON A ROLLING BASIS.

FEB 2 MONTHLY BUSINESS COUNCIL MEETING
MIAMI, OK

TO VIEW ALL UPCOMING EVENTS, OFFICE CLOSURES, AND MORE, VISIT [SHAWNEE-NSN.GOV/CALENDAR](http://shawnee-nsn.gov/calendar) ONLINE OR SCAN HERE WITH YOUR PHONE:



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NOTE FROM THE EDITOR:

Recognizing that digital communications via social media and the Internet are not necessarily preferred by or accessible to every tribal citizen, the Communications & Media Department will always strive to introduce new citizens services & programs through this publication or other direct mailings to all Shawnee households before they are broadcast online. Many opportunities for tribal citizens may arise between publications, however, particularly those coordinated with other tribes and third-party organizations. Those who can be encouraged to follow the tribe's digital channels for the most up-to-date information—primarily the tribal website (shawnee-nsn.gov) and monthly e-mail newsletter, "piyeetaacimooweneefa."

KNOW ANY SHAWNEES WHO'VE MOVED RECENTLY?

Let them know to update their mailing address with the Citizen Enrollment Department to ensure they continue receiving tribal news!

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE PIYEETAACIMOOWENEFA "LITTLE NEWS MESSAGES"

Get Shawnee Tribe news updates on the first Friday of every month. Subscribe to the e-newsletter at shawnee-nsn.gov/subscribe or scan this code with your smartphone's camera.



KIWIITAMAAKONAAKI HOKIMAAKI

MESSAGES FROM THE CHIEFS



**CHIEF
BEN BARNES**

Your Government Remains Open

The federal government may be closed, but your Shawnee Tribe's government remains open — and will continue to serve our people, regardless of what happens in Washington, D.C.

The ongoing government shutdown has made one thing clear: when political leaders in our nation's capital reach an impasse, it is everyday people — especially those in rural communities — who pay the price. For tribal nations, these moments are not new. Time and again, when federal or state systems falter, we have stepped forward to fill the gap, guided by our responsibility to protect our citizens and care for our communities.

On October 22, we were notified that the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or "SNAP," will pause operations due to resource and staffing shortages caused by the protracted shutdown. SNAP began during the Great Depression as a lifeline to prevent hunger among struggling families. Nearly a century later, it continues to serve one in eight Americans — a testament to its enduring importance.

Here at home, the need is real. In Ottawa County, the median household income is \$48,656 — more than \$13,000 below the national average. In Oklahoma, two out of every three households receiving SNAP have children living under their roof. These families are not statistics; they are our friends, neighbors, and relatives. The uncertainty surrounding SNAP puts real stress on parents who are already stretched thin, unsure how

they will keep food on the table as federal services grind to a halt. That is why I have approved the release of emergency funds to assist Shawnee citizens who may lose access to SNAP benefits during the shutdown. Our first responsibility as a government is to the welfare of our people, especially our elders and children. No Shawnee family should go hungry because of political dysfunction hundreds of miles away.

Tribal sovereignty is not just a matter of law or history — it is the living ability of our people to govern ourselves, to meet challenges head-on, and to take care of one another when others cannot or will not. The Shawnee Tribe is prepared to act with compassion and resolve, ensuring that our citizens are not left behind as this crisis unfolds.

We cannot control what happens in Congress, but we can control how we respond. Together, we will continue to uphold the values that define us: community, compassion, and perseverance.

Our ancestors endured much greater hardships and prevailed because they cared for one another and refused to let external forces dictate their fate. We will do the same. Your Shawnee Tribe remains strong, stable, and open for our people — today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

For assistance with emergency food support during the federal shutdown, Shawnee citizens may contact our Tribal Program Specialists at 918-542-2241 ext. 154 or 135.

Ben Barnes
Chief



**SECOND CHIEF
ROY
BALDRIDGE**

hato caakiwiyeefa --

As always, I hope everyone is doing well. As we prepare for the fall/winter holiday season, the Business Council are moving forward, discussing ways to improve existing services, envisioning potential future programs and taking steps to improve accountability.

Soon construction of additional office space will be completed, which should allow for improved access to services and free space at the Community Building and the Cultural Center for community cultural functions.

At the same time, we are working with local, state and federal agencies in this current period of federal shut-down to protect current programs related to Agriculture, Education, Business and Treaty Rights.

We do so by working with officials who are willing to work with us, whether Democrat or Republican. It is our intention to work with those who will help protect our tribal interest.

I would like to point out that while we are working to protect the funds we receive from the federal government, we are blessed in that many of our programs are tribally funded.

I hope that everyone has a blessed holiday season and would like to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve all these years.

niyaawe,

Roy D. Baldrige
Second Chief



THE SHAWNEE TRIBE BUSINESS COUNCIL



**SECRETARY
CAROLYN
FOSTER**



**TREASURER
MARK
McDOWELL**



**SEAT 1
JOHN
SPARKMAN**



**SEAT 2
DIANA
McLEAN**



**SEAT 3
DREW
DIXON**



**SEAT 4
COREY
WINESBURG**



**SEAT 5
MONTY
COOMBES**



**SEAT 6
MALACHI
SEARS**



**SEAT 7
KENI
HOOD**



WE ARE LOOKING FOR



RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

About our research

The Neu-AIRR lab is recruiting Shawnee Tribe community members for a new research study to better understand cultural factors and substance use.



We use functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and electroencephalography (EEG) to take live images of the brain and record brain activity in real time. It's painless and involves no radiation.



How to participate

To be eligible to participate, you must be:

- 21-65 years of age
- Shawnee Tribe community member (enrolled OR active in traditional Shawnee community)
- Fluent in English

Compensation will be provided



CONTACT US:
918-899-3482

SHAWNEE TRIBE CCDF CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS DRIVE-THRU

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2025
4:00-7:00 PM

SHAWNEE TRIBE HEADQUARTERS
29 S HWY 69A, MIAMI, OK 74354

*REGISTER BY: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 21

*Shawnee Tribe Child Care & Development Fund Program (CCDF) service area applies. Households with eligible children in the Shawnee Tribe CCDF service area will be mailed the registration form. Registered children ages 0-12 will receive a gift. Children must be in a vehicle to receive gift.



The Shawnee Tribe has made exciting updates to the Elder Assistance Reimbursement Program!



- Annual assistance cap doubled to \$1,000
- Provides reimbursement for a wide variety of tribal elders'* purchases, such as groceries, home maintenance, medical & hygienic supplies, utilities, taxes and insurance

* Ages 65+



For complete info,
scan here, or go to
shawnee-nsn.gov/elders

2025 AGENDA • ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL

September 20, 2025 • Craig County Fairgrounds, Vinita, OK

I. Call to Order

- A. Welcome Ben Barnes, Chief
- B. Declaration of Quorum Carolyn Foster, Secretary
- C. Invocation Shawnee Language Immersion Program

II. Officers' Reports

- A. State of the Nation Address Ben Barnes, Chief
- B. Presentation of Minutes of the 2024 Annual Meeting* Carolyn Foster, Secretary
- C. Treasurer's Report Mark McDowell, Treasurer / Matt Balka, FS Advisors

III. Other Reports

- A. History & Retrospective Ron Sparkman, Ambassador
- B. Shawnee Development Report Chris Floyd, President
- C. Introduction of Shawnee Global Tyler Levier, CEO

IV. New Business

- A. 2025 Shawnee Tribe Election Results Shawnee Tribe Election Committee
- B. Business of the Tribal Council

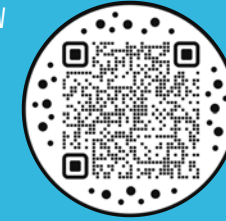
V. Announcements

- A. Tecumseh Memorial Day Sunday, October 5 (Tribal offices closed Monday, October 6)
- B. Indigenous Peoples' Day Monday, October 13 (Tribal offices closed)
- C. Shawnee Tribe Elders' Luncheon Wed., Nov. 5, 11:00 AM–1:00 PM, Community Building
- D. Shawnee Tribe Administrative Building Dedication & Ribbon-Cutting Mon., Dec. 8, 2025, 3:00 PM
- E. General Council Weekend 2026 September 18-19, 2026

VI. Adjournment*

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TO VIEW THE 2025 GENERAL COUNCIL SLIDESHOW
VISIT [YOUTUBE.COM/@SAAWANOOKI](https://www.youtube.com/@SAAWANOOKI) ONLINE OR
SCAN HERE WITH YOUR PHONE:





TRIBAL HISTORY & RETROSPECTIVE FROM AMBASSADOR SPARKMAN

WEEMEYAKWE (WHERE WE COME FROM)



On Saturday, September 20, during the Annual Meeting of the Tribal Council, former Shawnee Chief Ron Sparkman gave a history and retrospective. In 2019, the Business Council gave Sparkman the title of Ambassador to the Shawnee Tribe. He served as Chief from 2001 to 2019.

"We have come a long, long way," said Ambassador Sparkman. "I'm just utterly amazed at the progress that's been made."

During Sparkman's tenure as Chief, he was able to rely on meaningful friendships to help reinstate federal recognition for the Shawnee Tribe in 2000 and in 2018, helped secure secure partnerships to put land into federal trust in Guymon, OK.

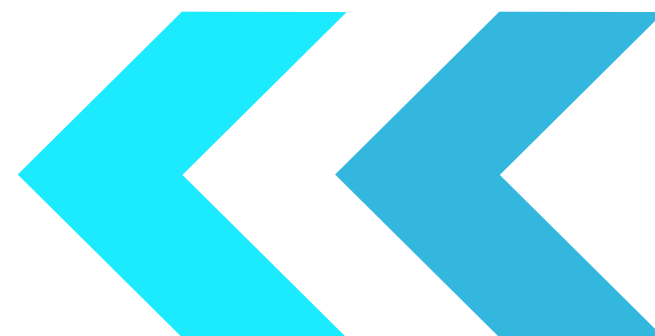
"We needed all the help we could get," said Ambassador Sparkman. "Strictly through friendships, we got everything approved."

The trust land acquired in Guymon was used to build a casino for the tribe. Golden Mesa Casino & Hotel just recently celebrated a grand opening for a \$78 million expansion which includes a 40,000-square foot gaming floor, new food and beverage options, an RV park and a four-floor hotel. With the proceeds from the casino, the tribe has been able to grow exponentially to 60 full-time staff members all serving numerous programs for tribal citizens.

As Ambassador Sparkman concluded his address, he said, "Let's continue



AMBASSADOR RON SPARKMAN



TO VIEW AMBASSADOR SPARKMAN'S ADDRESS VISIT [YOUTUBE.COM/SAAWANOOKI](https://www.youtube.com/saawanooki)



SHAWNEE DEVELOPMENT LAUNCHES PROJECT PROPOSAL PORTAL

The Shawnee Tribe is pleased to announce the launch of its Project Proposal Portal, a new digital platform designed to streamline the submission and evaluation of business ideas and partnership opportunities. This initiative supports the tribe's commitment to economic independence, sustainability, and diversification beyond gaming-related enterprises.

The portal offers a straightforward process for tribal citizens and the public to submit proposals that align with the tribe's long-term strategic vision. Whether you are interested in selling a business, exploring a partnership, or presenting an investment opportunity, the portal allows you to submit your proposal for careful review.

"Our new Project Proposal Portal is a major step forward in building a strong, diverse future for the Shawnee Tribe," said Chris Floyd, President of Shawnee Development LLC. "We invite all tribal citizens and partners to share their ideas and opportunities with us. Together, we can create lasting economic growth that honors our values and supports our community."



TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL, SCAN HERE WITH YOUR PHONE:



TA'SAAWANWAATOWEYAKWE

THE LANGUAGE CORNER / "WHERE WE SPEAK SHAWNEE"

The Shawnee Language Immersion Program continues to get busier each year! In June we hosted our second Shawnee language conference, where all our [redacted] (teachers) were reunited to build community and practice in person immersion activities. After spending two days immersed in language and culture, we joined the broader community for a social stomp dance. Then many of our [redacted] (students) participated in our third annual language fair in July. We had 14 entries across the fair's adult and children's categories filled with talent and creativity in [redacted] (Shawnee language). Take a look at some of the winning projects on the following pages!

FIRST PLACE WINNERS IN THE KINDERGARTEN- GRADE 12 CATEGORIES

- [redacted] by Cori Workman (Kindergarten)
- [redacted] by Aurora Shearhart (2nd Grade)
- [redacted] by Cecily Blanchard (4th Grade)
- [redacted] by Mya Blanchard (8th Grade)

ADULT SLIP BEGINNER STUDENT CATEGORY

- FIRST PLACE:**
[redacted] by Penni Parsons
- SECOND PLACE:**
[redacted] by Mary Rawlinson

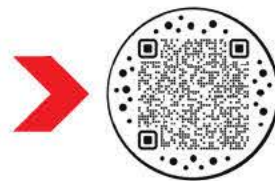
ADULT SLIP IMMERSION STUDENT CATEGORY

- FIRST PLACE:**
[redacted] by Kimberly Watkins
- SECOND PLACE (TIE):**
[redacted] by Brian Byrd
[redacted] by Edward Raines

ADULT CLP/APPRENTICE CATEGORY

- FIRST PLACE:**
[redacted] by Steve Roach
- SECOND PLACE (TIE):**
[redacted] by Sonni James
[redacted] by Bailey Quishenberry
- THIRD PLACE (TIE):**
[redacted] by Ryan Conway
[redacted] by Mason Hudson

JOIN THE LANGUAGE FAIR COURSE ON SLIPSTREAM TO EXPLORE ALL THE PROJECTS FROM EACH YEAR, SCAN HERE WITH YOUR PHONE:



BY MARY RAWLINSON



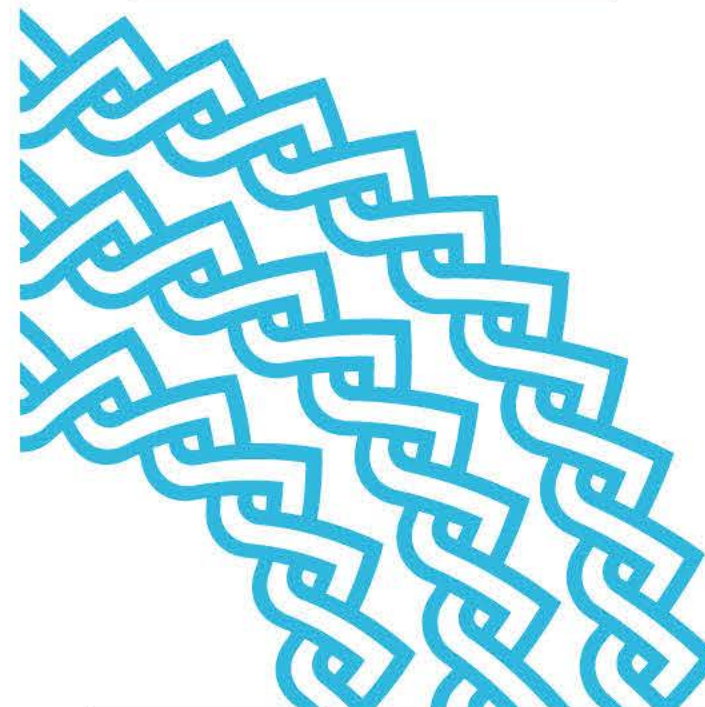
BY MYA BLANCHARD



BY SONNI JAMES

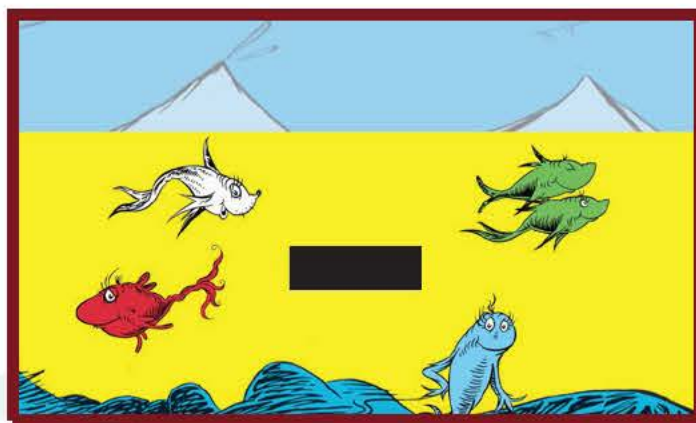


BY CECILY BLANCHARD





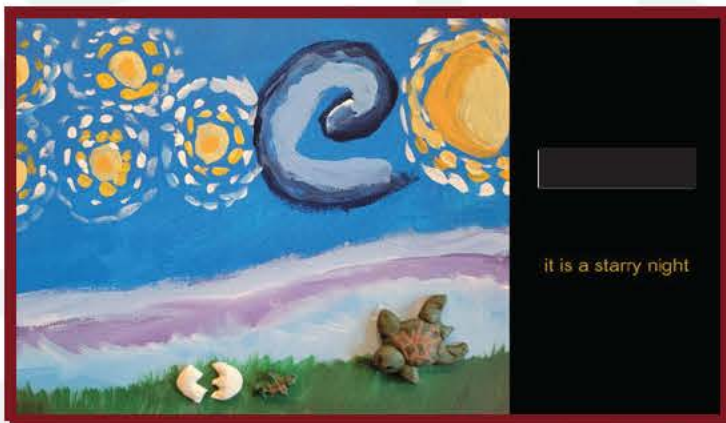
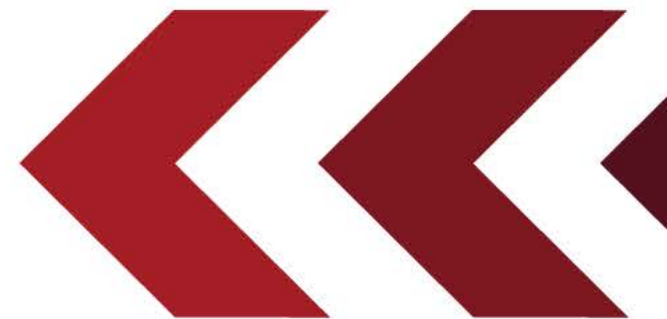
BY STEVE ROACH



BY BRIAN BYRD



BY EDWARD RAINES



BY AURORA SHEARHART



BY KIMBERLY WATKINS



BY PENNI PARSONS



BY MASON HUDSON



BY BAILEY QUISHENBERRY



BY RYAN CONWAY



BY CORI WORKMAN

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT:

SUMMER EVENTS



pepooni hatfo'keewe (Winter Storytelling)

December 6th, 2025

Emma "Mock" Donaldson saawanwaatoweewika
65225 E. 100 Rd., Miami, OK 74354
Dinner at 6:00PM, Storytelling at 7:30PM



JUNE 18-21, 2025 SHAWNEE LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

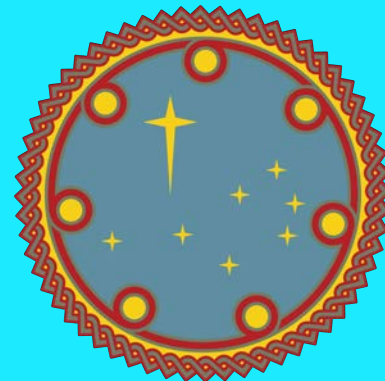
Emma "Mock" Donaldson
Shawnee Language House
Miami, OK



SLIP CLASSES RESUME IN JANUARY

Citizens of all three federally recognized Shawnee nations, their spouses and families, and Shawnee Tribe employees are eligible for enrollment. In addition to dialogue-based and immersion classes, SLIP will offer mayaani kake'kimetiwe (basic children's class).

For more information on 2026 classes, check out shawnee-nsn.gov/slip and be sure you're subscribed to piyeetaacimooweneefa, the tribe's monthly e-mail newsletter.



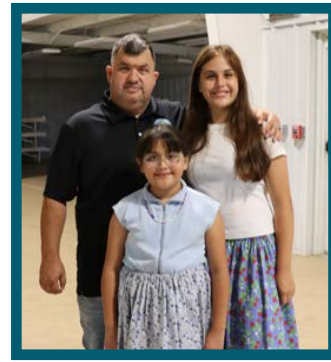
saawanwaatoweewe
kitakwitehepe

Ready to register? Email
shawneelanguage@shawnee-tribe.com
or call tribal headquarters at
(918) 542-2441.

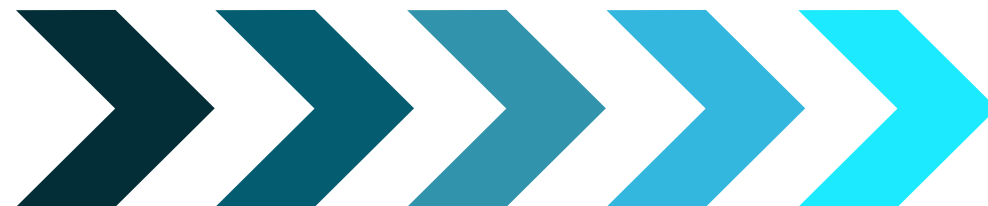


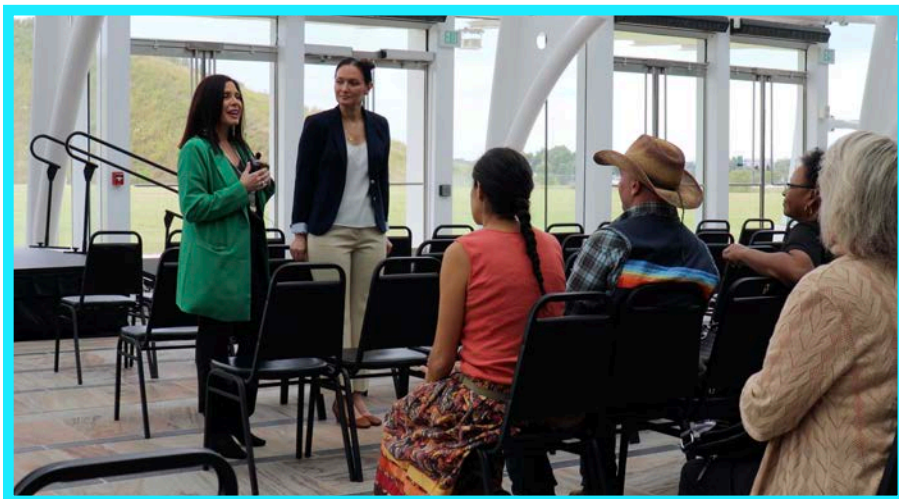
JUNE 21, 2025
KIPIYECIPAKICIIPE
COMMUNITY DINNER &
STOMP DANCE
Miami, OK

JULY 26, 2025
SHAWNEE LANGUAGE FAIR,
DINNER & STOMP
 Miami, OK



AUGUST 22, 2025
GOLDEN MESA CASINO &
HOTEL GRAND OPENING
 Guymon, OK





SEPTEMBER 14, 2025
FAMILY DISCOVERY
CENTER VIP PREVIEW
Oklahoma City, OK



HAASENOOKI

IN MEMORIAM

THE SHAWNEE TRIBE EXTENDS ITS DEEP CONDOLENCES TO THE SURVIVING FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF CITIZENS WHO HAVE RECENTLY PASSED ON.

**WILLIAM EDGAR BENSLEY
PHILLIP WADE JUBY
LYDIA JOYCE (ROWE) SPEARMAN
BRANDON WATT TIGER
LYNSEY CARMAN VAUGH**

SHAWNEE TRIBE BURIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Tribal citizens are eligible for up to \$5,000 in assistance covering funeral and burial costs after all other financial and insurance funding has been depleted. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted within 180 calendar days from the date of death. Visit shawnee-nsn.gov/burial for more information, or contact Program Specialist Tammy Burkybile at (918) 542-2441, ext. 106, for assistance.

Please note: Surviving family members of the deceased have reported the names listed here to the Citizen Enrollment Department. For assistance or to notify the tribe of a citizen's passing, visit shawnee-nsn.gov/enrollment or contact enrollment@shawnee-tribe.com.



NOV

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