

Dear Chickasaw Friends. Hello, how are you? I hope this finds you well and enjoying the first days of autumn.

We are very excited here anticipating the week-long Chickasaw Festival activities. I always enjoy so much the cultural demonstrations, princess pageant, Hall of Fame reception, etc. Remember, this week is planned for you, the Chickasaw people. I do so hope that you will come and join us and celebrate being Chickasaw.

This month, the Human Resources committee approved the Nation's application for membership in the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI). The NCAI has for many years been supportive of Native American issues. As an independent group, NCAI is representative of the largest concentration of Native Americans and is often called upon by Congress to provide information and testimony on Indian issues. The Chickasaw Nation has been a member in good standing since the early 1980s. Because of its population of 40,000 citizens, the Chickasaw Nation is entitled to 180 votes at the NCAI national convention to be held this year in Tulsa.

I was a Community Health representative (CHR) for 20 years and was honored to be asked to speak at the 20th annual conference of the Oklahoma Area Association of CHRs. I was remembered as the first president of the Association and they honored me with a plaque, crystal dish and Pendleton purse. The conference was held on September 19 - 23 in Tulsa and brought back many good memories. The theme of the conference was "Native American Survivors." And survivors they are! In fiscal year 1983, Congress came close to totally eliminating the CHR program. Only action from tribal governments and the CHRs themselves saved the program.

I attended the September meeting of the Chickasaw Nation Council of Elders. Theo Underwood, the new Veterans Coordinator, was guest speaker. We could tell that Mr. Underwood is very dedicated to his position because he gave a very from-the-heart presentation of our veterans. Please help Mr. Underwood identify our Chickasaw veterans so that we can

honor them. Please contact his office with your name and service information or if you are a widow or widower of a veteran and you are disabled or need any other assistance. His phone number is (580) 226-4821.

The National Indian Council on Aging (NICOA) and the Oklahoma Indian Council on Aging are planning a reception/dinner for Friday, October 28, in Tulsa for all the Oklahoma tribal leaders to ensure that the 30 year anniversary NICOA conference will be the largest and most successful of all NICOA conferences.

If you have questions or comments, please email me through dean.mcmanus@chickasaw.net or contact me through the address or telephone numbers listed elsewhere in this and every issue of the Chickasaw Times. Happiness is people like you!

God Bless

Dean McManus, Pontotoc District Seat 4