

Hello and greetings from Legislator Mary Jo Green, Seat 5, Pontotoc District and Chairman of the Health Care Committee! We are so happy to report that the Legislature voted to build a new hospital! We understand that if the Nation builds the facility, then the Nation is eligible to receive funds from the Indian Health Service for equipment and staffing. The new hospital will employ approximately 800 people. We already own property on Stonecipher Boulevard just south of Ada that might be the location for the new hospital. The facility is scheduled to be completed in the fall of 2007.

Kudos to the oversight committee, Neal McCaleb, Wayne Scribner, Bill Lance and Wes Brantley. Mr. McCaleb is the committee chair. The committee is developing the plans which will be submitted for legislative approval. We expect the new Indian health facility to be the best in the United States! The project will be a government-to-government partnership between the Chickasaw Nation and the United States and will be a model that can be followed by other Indian nations.

Kudos also to the Chickasaw honor students at East Central University that graduate this year. At commencement next May, those students will be honored with a sash and pendant. This is the first year for such honors.

Wellness Centers are being planned for Sulphur and Tishomingo. The locations of the Wellness Centers have not yet been named.

The Legislature also passed a resolution authorizing clothing grants for grade school through high school students. I have been asking for such a program for some time now and am very glad that it is coming about. A clothing grant of \$200 will be issued to Chickasaw school children ages 3 to 18, regardless of where they live, for each school year. The program is expected to cost about one and a half million dollars - money earned through the effort of Chickasaw Enterprises.

Stay tuned here and on www.chickasaw.net for instructions on applying for the program.

The Chickasaw Census helped the program come into being. See what good things can happen when you stand up to be counted?

Well, that is a lot of good news for this month. I will publish a report from the Health System again next month. Meanwhile, may God bless each of you readers and the Chickasaw Nation.

I would love to hear from you! Please contact me through my email address mary.green@chickasaw.net or through the address and telephone number listed elsewhere in this and every issue of the Chickasaw Times and on the Chickasaw Nation web site. My articles are also located on the web site. Until next month, thank you.