



THE ABSENTEE SHAWNEE NEWS

www.astribe.com

Volume 35, No. 12

December 2025

Topping Out Ceremony for New Shawnee Clinic

On November 18, The Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System (ASTHS) and the AST Executive Committee signed the final beam on the new Shawnee clinic. The beam was displayed to allow employees to sign. The ASTHS clinic broke ground on the new facility March 2025.

The 69.5 acre-site is located adjacent to Tecumseh Lake at the end of Benson Park Road. The new clinic, located at 39659 Benson Park Road, will feature a 63,000-square-foot main facility alongside a 13,000-square-foot ancillary building that will house additional facilities and a gym. The new bigger clinic will mean more services and modern amenities for tribal members in one location. Currently, members are going to the Little Axe Clinic for dental and optometry. When completed, the new Shawnee clinic will have triple the space of the current facility.

The current Shawnee Clinic was built in 1977. The design phase for the new clinic began in August 2024 in collaboration with Childers Architect. Flintco was selected as the Construction Manager in fall 2024 and will oversee the construction of the facility. Construction is expected to be completed by October 2026.





GOVERNOR
John Johnson



Lt. GOVERNOR
Diane Ponkilla



SECRETARY
Misty McGirt



TREASURER
Joseph Blanchard



REPRESENTATIVE
Anthony Johnson



GOVERNOR’S REPORT

John Johnson, AST Governor

Hello All,
Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!! I hope you all have a great start to the New Year. We faced many challenges in 2025, so I am looking forward to 2026 with a new start for all of us. I would like to apologize for being out of office two weeks in November. I had eye surgery that kept me away from the office but I am back now and preparing for December.
The Children’s Christmas gift cards application process began on November 17,

2025. I hope you had the chance to get your child’s application in if you want it by Christmas. If your application is received after December 17, 2025 the gift card will be mailed out after the holidays. The overall deadline for the gift cards is January 30, 2026 at 5:00pm. You may contact my office for more information.
During the recent Government shut-down, the Food bank received several new applicants. We now serve well over 500 applicants a month. With this number increasing, I encourage you to please continue using the food bank for your monthly food boxes. These boxes will

help supplement your household food supplies.
Please watch for updates on events happening for December for all AST Elders. The EC is working on another event for Christmas and this date will be posted online as soon as details are confirmed.
Should you have any question or concerns you may contact my office or my assistant at the information listed below.
Thank You
John Johnson - 405-275-4030 ext. 3500
governor@astribc.com
Alvina Barnes - 405-275-4030 ext. 3501
alvinab@astribc.com

LT. GOVERNOR’S REPORT

Diane Ponkilla, AST Lt. Governor

Greetings,
I would like to wish all family and friends Happy Holiday’s. I hope the government shut down does not have a long negative impact on anyone. I know the struggle to catch up once you get behind on finances. On November 04, 2025, the Agriculture Department had two steer with a live weight of 1,012 lbs. and 1,014 lbs. processed for roughly 720 lbs. of hamburger and stew meat in 2 lb. packaging to help the food bank with the expected increase of TM’s applying for assistance due to losing their monthly SNAP benefits.
Secretary Misty McGirt and I attended the Veteran’s Thanksgiving Luncheon on

Saturday, November 08, 2025 at Thunderbird Casino Warrior Room. I was honored to be among a few of our AST Veteran’s to visit and share a great bar-b-q meal. “THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE TO ALL VETERANS PAST AND PRESENT”
The AST Elder’s Committee had their annual Thanksgiving meeting and luncheon at Golden Corral in Norman on Saturday, November 15, 2025. I will be on travel status December 8-12, 2025 attending the Intertribal Agriculture Council (IAC) Conference in Las Vegas, NV.
Meeting/Closing Schedule:
11/04/2025 Health Shareholders
11/05/2025 TEI Shareholders
11/07/2025 Bid Meeting (Bldg. #3)
11/08/2025 AST Veterans Thanksgiving

11/10/2025	Meet with AST Youth TM (future Governor)
11/11/2025	Closed (Veterans Day)
11/12/2025	Executive Committee
11/12/2025	Special Healthboard
11/14/2025	Construction
11/15/2025	AST Elders Thanksgiving
11/24/2025	Food Bank Distribution (Turkey/Ham)
11/27/2025	Closed (Thanksgiving)
11/28/2025	Closed (Thanksgiving)

The AST Maintenance had the entrance to the Title VI building repaired in October and I would also like to congratulate the Joseph Morton, Project Coordinator for being nominated for the KGFF Employee of the week.
Ne yi wa



SECRETARY’S REPORT

Misty McGirt, AST Secretary

Greetings Tribal Members,
I hope everyone has been doing well and safe with this year almost coming to an end. I hope everyone had a great turkey day! It’s a time to give thanks for what our ancestors have endured for us to be here and most importantly to be with family. November was also Native American Heritage month I am very proud to be native, to be Absentee-Shawnee and to be able to still practice our traditional ways passed down from our ancestors and taught to me from my Kokoge (grandma). I’ve been very busy with weekly and monthly meetings. I had a pleasure, and it was an honor to attend the veteran’s parade with our veterans. I would like to thank all of our veterans that served! After the parade they had a ceremony for the veteran’s memorial in Norman it was beautiful, it was pointed out there were names missing of a lot of our tribal members. Names will still be added to the memorial so every man or woman that has served our country, or is still serv-

ing armed forces, and a tie to Cleveland county are eligible to be included on the memorial so there is still time. Our media has more information on page 3.
Here are a few updates some of my departments have going on.
Agriculture Department
November brought strong momentum for the Agriculture Department, with successful community events, productive herd updates, and exciting progress as we move toward winter. They processed two steers this month. This month, the team weaned all spring calves, Hay season wrapped up successful. There gearing up for calving season, which will begin soon.
Indian Child Welfare
Help Change a Child’s Life — Become a Foster Parent Today
Across our tribal community, many of our AST children need a safe, loving place to call home. Foster parents play a vital role in helping these children heal, grow, and thrive. Opening your heart and home, even for a short time, can make a lifelong difference for a child in need.
If you have ever thought about foster-

ing, now is the time to learn more. Children of all ages—especially sibling groups and teens—need families who can provide stability, compassion, and understanding during a difficult time in their lives. Our team provides training, 24/7 support, and financial assistance to ensure you have the tools to succeed. You don’t need to be perfect—just willing to care.
Learn more about becoming a foster parent or sign up for an information session. Contact us at 405-395-4490, ICW@astribc.com or visit www.astribc.com/indian-child-welfare
Together, we can build brighter futures, one child at a time.
Human Resources
The staff is preparing for 2026 and is excited to offer more leadership and development training sessions aimed at strengthening the AST workforce to better serve each other and the community.
That is all I have to report at this time if you should have any questions or concerns please contact my office.
Ne yi wa!
Secretary McGirt

REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Anthony Johnson, AST Representative

Hello Tribal Members,
In early November, I traveled to Ohio with our Cultural Preservation department to attend the 10th Annual Tribal Nations Conference at Great Steak Park.

I also traveled to the Johnson O’ Malley conference in Denver, CO to support our Education department. We will honor our tribal employees this December with an employee luncheon on December 3rd.
Thank you to all our tribal employees for all the hard work you do to support our tribe. I hope everyone has a happy and safe holiday season. Should you have any

questions or need any assistance, please contact my office by phone or email.
Phone: (405) 531-3512.
Email: adjohnson@astribc.com
Sincerely,
Anthony “Tadpole” Johnson,
Tribal Representative



YOUR VOICE MATTERS

SCAN THE QR

DEADLINE DEC. 20, 2025

We Want to Hear from You!
The AST Executive Committee and Departments are asking for your input to help shape the Tribe’s future.
Please take a few minutes to complete the **Community Needs Assessment Survey**. Your feedback will help guide future goals and priorities for the Absentee Shawnee Tribe.



AST Veterans Association Events

Hi ho- gi ke we ya fi, “Hello Everyone”, Absentee Shawnee Veterans Association would like to share some pictures of some of AST Veterans recent events in November. The AST Veterans gave an early Thanksgiving Luncheon Saturday Nov. 8th at Thunderbird Casino Little Axe. AST Veterans, Family, Friends and Some of Our Executive Committee members attended. The very next day, Sunday Nov. 9th, AST Veterans Association was invited by the City of Norman to attend an Veterans Day Parade near the University of Oklahoma Campus. AST Veterans, Family, Friends and an Executive Committee Member attended. “WE ARE SMALL BUT WE ARE MIGHTY”.

The AST Veterans Association would like to give a “Big” Thank You to the following for always Leading a Hand and keeping the Veterans moving forward, ASTHS, Marty Lofgren, John Kammerzell, ASTHS Maintenance, Kevin “MOOSE” Blanchard, Leonard Foreman, All EC Members, Diane Ponkilla, Misty McGirt, and Mrs Atheda Fletcher, Mindy Longhorn, All Veterans, Family, Friends, Tribal Members. Si li no ke ka no la. AST Veterans Association Commander Jason Bender.



Top Left Photo: AST Veterans Thanksgiving Luncheon; Top Right Photo (L-R): Front row AST Secretary Misty McGirt, Atheda Fletcher, Taren Williams. Back row Twila Parker, Jason Bender
Bottom Left Photo: AST Veterans Float; Bottom Right Photo: Tribal member and veteran Esteline Schulenberg, Marjorie Kaniatobe, Karen Kaniatobe, Tina Schulenberg.

Attention AST Veterans and Tribal Members

Native Americans serve in the Armed Forces at five times the national average. The first ones to inhabit this soil are the first ones to stand up and fight. These brave men and women often shy away from the spotlight; serving not for accolades but a strong sense of pride and tradition.

There is a memorial dedicated to Cleveland County veterans in Reaves Park in Norman, yet many AST veterans are not listed.

The Cleveland County Veteran's Memorial was dedicated in 2008 and contains over 3,300 names. The memorial features an eagle with a 7 ft. wingspan perched atop a five-sided granite, 20-foot obelisk centered in a granite plaza that includes a five-pointed star floor, approximately 30 feet across. Each point of the star represents a branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

The obelisk is engraved with the names of those Cleveland County Veterans who died while serving their country. The plaza is decorated with five granite tablets that have the names of Cleveland County residents who have served in any branch of the service.

The creation of the memorial was spearheaded by the late Don Schulenberg, husband of tribal member and veteran Esteline Schulenberg. Both were members of the AST Veterans Association.

The memorial is currently taking applications for names to be added. Every man and woman with a tie to Cleveland County who has, or is still serving our country's armed forces is eligible to be included on the memorial. There is no cost to anyone who wants to add a name. To fill out an application or search the database of names listed, visit <https://www.normanok.gov/residents-visitors/parks-recreation/parks/reaves-park>

The names etched into this memorial stand as more than words carved in stone—they are lives lived with courage, pride, tradition and sacrifice. Each name represents a story, a family, and a legacy that will not be forgotten.

ATTENTION AST VETERANS!!!!

CLEVELAND COUNTY VETERAN'S MEMORIAL

★★★★★

NAMES CONTINUE TO BE ADDED TO THE MEMORIAL. EVERY MAN AND WOMAN WITH A TIE TO CLEVELAND COUNTY WHO HAS, OR IS STILL SERVING OUR COUNTRY'S ARMED FORCES ARE ELIGIBLE TO BE INCLUDED ON THE MEMORIAL.

NATIVE AMERICANS SERVE IN THE MILITARY MORE THAN ANY OTHER GROUP!

Memorial location:
Reaves Park
2501 S. Jenkins Ave.
Norman, OK

AST CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS

\$25 GIFT CARD PROGRAM

Children's Christmas \$25 Gift Card Program Application Acceptance:
Monday, November 17th, 2025

Children's Christmas \$25 Gift Card Program Application Deadline:
Friday, January 30th, 2026 at 5:00 PM CST.

Applications must be submitted before January 30th, 2026 at 5:00 PM
(FIRM DEADLINE, NO EXCEPTIONS)

Also please note, applications received after December 17, 2025
will not be mailed until after the Holidays.

SCAN QR CODE TO APPLY!

If you have any questions,
please contact us at
405-275-4030 Ext. 3501
or email GiftCardHelp@astribe.com

BUFFALO NICKEL x2

IS HERE FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

x2

BUFFALO-NICKEL-REWARDS

ALLNATIONS BANK

FIVE CENTS

All Nations Bank

FDIC FDIC-Insured - Backed by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Government

Earn double Buffalo Nickels on every All Nations Bank debit card purchase over \$1 from Nov. 1–Dec. 31.

Community Alert: New Fraud Tactics Targeting Our Area

By Eri Gjergji, SVP of Technology at AllNations Bank

We recently gathered with local law enforcement and fellow community bankers in the Oklahoma City area to discuss the latest trends in financial crimes targeting our neighbors. The goal was simple: share intelligence so we can better protect you. What we learned is that scammers are moving away from generic attacks and becoming highly personalized, aggressive, and “local.”

One troubling trend we identified is exactly who these criminals are targeting. We most frequently see victims fall into two distinct groups: young adults under 25 and seniors over 65. Whether due to a trusting nature or a willingness to be polite and continue a conversation, these groups are being singled out. This is a call to action for families: We need to watch out for one another. If you have a child just starting to manage their own finances or an elderly parent, please talk to them about these tactics.

We recently encountered a case right here in our community that illustrates just how sophisticated these tactics have become. A customer received a call that appeared to come directly from the bank’s official phone number. This technique, known as “spoofing,” allows criminals to hijack the Caller ID you trust to lower your guard before you even say “hello.”

The caller claimed to be from the “The Bank’s Fraud Department,” but they didn’t just ask about a random charge. They asked, “Did you just authorize a transaction at [Local Business Name]?” By naming a real business the customer recognized in their own town, the threat felt immediate and authentic. The scammers had done their homework, likely researching the customer on social media to mention personal details—like hobbies or family members—to sound like a friendly, local banker who knew them well.

When the customer said “No, I didn’t make that charge,” the caller pretended to be relieved and offered to help “secure” the account. This was the trap. By verifying a fake transaction and bonding over personal details, the scammer made the customer believe they were on the same team. Once the customer’s guard was down, the scammer talked them into handing over login credentials and asked them to set a new password for their digital banking, one they provided. Once they took over the account information, the customer was unable to log in. They asked for further information, such as card number, PIN number, etc. This type of attack has affected multiple banks in Oklahoma over the past few months.

This story highlights a critical lesson: Scammers will often create a fake problem just so they can pretend to be the hero who fixes it. Whether it is a “romance scam” where an online boyfriend or girlfriend suddenly needs emergency travel money, or an impostor claiming to be the IRS with a warrant for your arrest, these scams all rely on panic. Panic is the scammer’s best weapon. If anyone calls you—claiming to be the government, a utility company, or even us—and tries to rush you into making a payment to avoid arrest or a shut-off, it is a red flag. Legitimate organizations will never force you to stay on the phone and pay immediately.

The threats aren’t limited to phone calls. Local police also reported a rise in “skimmers”—malicious devices that criminals place over the real card slot at an ATM or gas pump to steal your data. You can often spot these by performing a simple “wiggle test.” Before you insert your card, grab the card reader and give it a firm wiggle. Real card slots are solid parts of the machine, while skimmers often feel loose, bulky, or cheap. You should also be mindful of covering your hand while typing your PIN, as criminals often hide tiny cameras nearby to record your keystrokes.

Finally, we must address the rising threat of cryptocurrency fraud. Our best advice is to avoid Bitcoin ATMs entirely. There is almost no legitimate reason for a standard bank customer to use these machines, and no government agency will ever ask you to pay a fine via a crypto kiosk. Detective Wathor, a local expert in Canadian county, emphasized a critical point: A receipt from a Bitcoin ATM is not a ticket to get your money back. Once cash is converted to crypto and sent to a scammer, it is impossible to recover.

In a world of digital threats, your best defense is a personal relationship. Get to know your bankers. We are here to look out for you. If you ever receive a call that feels “off,” or if someone is pressuring you to move money quickly, hang up and do not use the number they give you. Call us directly at the bank. We can help you verify if a request is real before you lose a single penny.

FROM THE ELECTION COMMISSION

The Filing Period for Elective Office in 2026

A tribal member may file for office, **January 1 to January 10 (excluding weekends and holidays). Hours to file are 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Potential candidates please consult the Election Ordinance for the procedures and qualifications when running for elective office.

The following positions will be open for the Election to be held in 2026:

ELECTION COMMISSION		
Position	Filing Fees	Term
Deputy Commissioner	\$100.00	1 Year Term (Prorated)
Secretary	\$200.00	2 Year Term (Prorated)
Commission Member #2	\$300.00	3 Year Term

Fee Amount includes: Alcohol test, drug test, MVR, OSBI, FBI fee plus certified postage fee, ballot printing (twice), Absentee Ballot and correspondence postage.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- A) An enrolled member of the tribe.
- B) An eligible voter for purposes of voting in tribal elections.
- C) Must be twenty-one (21) years of age on the date of the election for which he/she desires to be a candidate.
- D) Physically reside within the following Counties: Cleveland, Pottawatomie, Oklahoma, McClain, Garvin, Pontotoc, Seminole, Lincoln, or Okfuskee.
- E) In cases where a prospective candidate has been convicted of a felony, such person shall not be eligible for consideration as a candidate until at least five (5) years have passed following completion of the penalty for such conviction(s).
- F) Not more than one (1) member of an immediate family shall be elected to the same tribal elective body except when running as a candidate for the same elective position.

ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (approved by Referendum June 20, 2015)

- A) Must have a valid Oklahoma State Driver’s License
- B) Must have a negative result on a drug and alcohol test
- C) Must have a high school diploma or GED



A WINTER GATHERING

Happy December

JOIN JOURNEY TO HEAL FOR A NIGHT OF CRAFTING, SNACKING, AND TOGETHERNESS

TUESDAY 16TH DECEMBER
6PM - 8PM

AST MULTIPURPOSE BLDG
2029 James L Edwards Ln
Shawnee, OK 74801

RSVP: LACY J CARROLL
LJCARROLL@ASTRIBE.COM
405.275.4030 EXT 3676





Absentee Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Building Blocks C.D.C.
2025 S. Gordon Cooper Dr.
Shawnee, Ok. 74801
(405)878-0633 FAX: (405)878-0156



Building Blocks II is an accredited 5 Star, OkDHS Licensed Center. Our hours are 7a.m. to 6p.m. Monday-Friday. We take children ages 6 weeks through Pre-K (4-5Yr Olds). We are accepting wait list applications for children. If you are interested in getting your child on our waiting list please call and we can email you a waiting list application or you may stop by to fill one out.

Building Blocks Teachers and Children love to do Christmas Activities and Projects. The Holiday season is a busy time at Building Blocks. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Safe & Happy Holiday Season.

Building Blocks Christmas Program will be in the evening on December 19th.

Classroom Christmas Parties will be December 23rd at 3:00p.m.

BUILDING BLOCKS WILL BE CLOSED DECEMBER 24TH & 25TH.



BUILDING BLOCKS 3

December Newsletter 2025

Welcome to December! We are so excited to see what this month will bring at Building Blocks!

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Closed Dec. 3rd for cleaning and staff holiday party
- Christmas Program is Dec. 12th at 7:00 p.m.
- Closed Dec. 24th & 25th for Christmas

We had Junior Miss Sac and Fox Nation come read to us!



Our friends had so much fun with the Mad Scientist!





Happy 11th Birthday, Jaxon!
Love - Mom & Kaydence



Happy Birthday Ben
Love - Mom



Player Spotlight: Mason Harjo Bruner

Congratulations to Mason Harjo Bruner on an amazing season with Little Axe Little League Football! Mason, a proud Absentee Shawnee Tribal member, is 9 years old and currently in the 3rd grade.

Mason’s love for sports — especially football, his favorite — shines every time he steps on the field. This season, he finished strong, earning several impressive awards including:

- MVP Ring
- Best Defensive Player
- Catch Me If You Can
- Player of the Game

Mason is the son of Rhiannon Bruner (Absentee Shawnee) and Justin Bruner (Muscogee Creek). His family and community are incredibly proud of his dedication, teamwork, and sportsmanship.

Way to go, Mason! Your hard work and passion for the game truly stand out — the future looks bright for this young athlete!

Agriculture Department Report

November brought strong momentum across the Agriculture Department, with successful community events, productive herd updates, and exciting progress as we move toward winter.

We kicked off the month with a lively pumpkin patch event for 85 daycare children and their families. The kids enjoyed choosing their pumpkins and exploring the patch, creating a fun fall experience for everyone involved.

Our team then completed a two-day distribution of more than 2,000 pumpkins, ensuring families and programs across the community had access to seasonal produce.

We also processed two steers this month. This cycle helps us build a strong supply of beef ahead of the government shutdown, positioning the food pantry to support the expected increase in families needing assistance. We’re proud to help keep quality food accessible during uncertain times.

This month, the team weaned all spring calves, and they’re settling in well.

Hay season wrapped up successfully, leaving us well-prepared with winter feed reserves.

With cooler weather here, we’re gearing up for calving season, which will begin soon. Our staff is preparing facilities, monitoring the herd, and getting ready for a busy season ahead.

The Ag Department is grateful for the continued support from the community and looks forward to carrying this momentum into December.



The Absentee Shawnee Veterans Association would like to thank and honor ASTHS Maintenance for all their support. Each ASTHS maintenance employee has or has had a veteran service in their families. Ne yi wa.

Photo L-R: Kevin Kaseca, Otis Evans, Ronnie Little Axe, Luke Sage, Kevin “Moose” Blanchard, Leonard Foreman.

We're Hiring !



THUNDERBIRD
CASINO

OPEN POSITIONS:

- + Director of Finance
- + F&B Team Member (Both Locations)
- + F&B Lead (Shawnee)
- + Player's Club Supervisor (Shawnee)
- + EVS Supervisor (Norman)
- + EVS Team Member (Both Locations)
- + Operations Manager on Duty (Both)
- + Security Supervisor (Norman)
- + Security Officer (Shawnee)
- + Slot Tech (Both Locations)

Apply Now

www.playthunderbird.com

\$500 Sign on Bonus!
(Split between 90th and 180th days)

GRAND FINALE

SATURDAYS IN NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER

Win a
2025 JEEP GRAND WAGONEER

Saturday, December 27, 2025 • 10:30pm

EARN ENTRIES DAILY! ONE ENTRY FOR EVERY 250 POINTS EARNED

PLUS, WIN \$250 CASH AND 250 ENTRIES ON SATURDAYS

HOT SEATS EVERY 20 MINUTES FROM 7PM TO 10PM



THUNDERBIRD
CASINO
NORMAN

Must be actively playing with a ThunderCard and have earned 25 same-day points to be eligible for Hot Seats. Must activate entries on Saturday, December 27, 2025 from 4pm to 10:25pm to be eligible for Grand Prize drawing. Must be present to win. Management has the right to modify or cancel promotions with or without notice.



THUNDERBIRD
CASINO
SHAWNEE

GRAND FINALE

SATURDAYS
IN NOVEMBER
AND DECEMBER



WIN A NEW JEEP GRAND CHEROKEE

Saturday, December 27, 2025 • 10:30pm

EARN ENTRIES DAILY! ONE ENTRY FOR EVERY 100 POINTS EARNED
STARTING NOVEMBER 1.

\$100/100 HOT SEAT SATURDAYS

Win \$100 Cash and 100 Grand Prize bonus entries with hot seat drawings every 20 minutes from 3PM to 10PM every week.

Must be actively playing with a ThunderCard and have earned 25 same-day points to be eligible for Hot Seats. Must activate entries on Saturday, December 27, 2025 from 4pm to 10:25pm to be eligible for Grand Prize drawing. Must be present to win. Management has the right to modify or cancel promotions with or without notice.



SAVE THE DATE!!

AST 477 &
AST LANGUAGE PROGRAM'S
SWEETHEART
SOCIAL/STOMP DANCE

FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
6	7	8

February 7th, 2026
@Thunderbird Event Center - Norman, OK
Follow Absentee Shawnee Tribe Facebook for More Information to Come!



AST 477 PROGRAM
SWEETHEART
DANCE



THUNDERBIRD CASINO



NORMAN

Holiday

SPECIAL HOURS

NOV. 26TH	→	10:00 AM - 4:00 AM
NOV. 27TH THANKSGIVING DAY	→	2:00 PM - 4:00 AM
DEC. 24TH CHRISTMAS EVE	→	10:00 AM - 4:00 AM
DEC. 25TH CHRISTMAS DAY	→	OPEN 2:00 PM UNTIL DEC 31ST AT 5PM
DEC. 31ST NEW YEARS EVE	→	CLOSED TO PUBLIC FROM 5PM - 2AM FOR PRIVATE EVENT
JAN. 1ST NEW YEARS DAY	→	OPEN 2:00 AM UNTIL JAN 4TH AT 2:00 AM
JAN 4TH	→	OPEN 10:00 AM RETURN TO NORMAL HOURS

SHAWNEE

Holiday

SPECIAL HOURS

NOV. 27TH THANKSGIVING DAY	→	2:00 PM - 2:00 AM
DEC. 25TH CHRISTMAS DAY	→	2:00 PM - 2:00 AM
DEC. 31ST NEW YEARS EVE	→	10:00 AM - 2:00 AM
JAN. 1ST NEW YEARS DAY	→	10:00 AM - 2:00 AM

The Absentee Shawnee Tribe will be closed
Wednesday, December 24th - Christmas Eve
Thursday, December 25th - Christmas
Thursday, January 1st - New Year's Day

PAID AD

COMMUNITY
HEALTH

Centers of Oklahoma

Family Health & Dental Clinics

"A Mary Mahoney Grassroots Expansion"

PEDIATRICS

FAMILY PRACTICE

YOU are why WE are here...make an appointment today!

405.395.0399

Shawnee Family Medical Center

130 N. Broadway, Suite #300

Shawnee, OK 74801

HEALTHY START

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

& MORE



ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL

HEALTH SYSTEM

Prevention. Progress. Pride.



www.asthealth.org

December 2025

Section B

HEALTH BUZZZ!!



Hatito (Hello) and Happy Holidays, AST Family! Hope everyone is well and full of holiday cheer!

I want to share a short recap on what we have been up to lately. In October, we attended the Zombie Run, hosted by the Director of Diabetes & Wellness, Joseph Holtzclaw, and his awesome team at the Little Axe Clinic. As you know, Native American's experience the highest rates of diabetes in the U.S. Our Diabetes Department is such an important part of our health system, and this team brings relevant services in prevention and management every day! We thank them for their service and for always including us in their special events!

The Zombie Run was held at Lake Thunderbird and was a huge success! There were zombies, food truck, DJ playing spooky music, and children of all ages decked out in their favorite costumes. We participated in Trunk or Treat by passing out goodies to the trick or treaters, and turned into zombies to chase 5K and Fun Run joggers for a bit of zombie-fright along the race course. A great time was had by all!



Atheda Fletche & Bailey Harris



Lacy Gillean & Emily Brown



Jack Hartgrave & Bailey Harris, SPF-PFS Grant & Michaela Tuberville, TOR Grant

We also attended Title VI's MIPPA event on October 30. What a great turnout and event!!



Title VI IMPPA Event, Lacy Gillean & Title VI Gorilla

On November 6, Atheda and I attended the Annual Oklahoma City Indian Clinic Men's Health Fair. Several vendors participated this year, and they even held a chili cookoff contest. We had a great time taste-testing and voting for the best chili. Most importantly, we enjoyed connecting and sharing information on dementia with our Native American community in Oklahoma County.

This was our last event for the year and what a year it has been! Over the course of the year, we were invited to participate in 30 events, and out of the 30 events, we attended 28. We have enjoyed meeting, connecting, and getting the word out about our AST health system and our two interventions for caregivers and their loved ones with dementia!

As we look forward to 2026, we are pleased to announce that we successfully won the Indian Health Service, 3-year grant, Addressing Dementia in Tribal and Urban Indian Communities: Models of Care. This grant will help us bring more dementia services and support for our Absentee Shawnee Tribal members as well as many other tribal members within our I.H.S. Shawnee Service area.

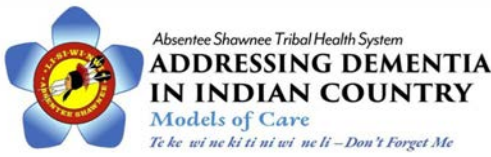
In closing, may your holidays be filled with joy and peace! Thank you for being a valued part of our year, and we look forward to a prosperous new year together!

If you or someone you know would benefit from the [Savvy Caregiver in Indian Country](#) or [Music & Memory](#) programs, contact adpi@astribe.com, or call [405-701-7906](tel:405-701-7906).

Check out our web-page on the [Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System's](https://www.asthealth.org) website:
<https://www.asthealth.org>

Click on: ["Programs and Preventions"](#) and then click on ["Seeking Hope"](#). You can sign up on line also!

Lacy Gillean
Dementia Care Specialist



Oklahoma City Indian Clinic's Men's Health Fair

NOTICE OF CHANGE!

At the Absentee Shawnee Tribal Health System, we are committed to making your healthcare experience as easy and convenient as possible. That's why **STARTING NOV. 1, 2025**, we're moving all patient communication and tools to the powerful Healow app! We've said goodbye to our old reminder system and hello to a better way to manage your health.

With the Healow app, you can:

- ✓ View Lab Results Online
- ✓ Request Medication Refills
- ✓ Send/ Receive Secure Messages
- ✓ Request Online Appointments
- ✓ Access Your Family's Health Information

It's everything you need, all in one place. Download the Healow app today from your app store and get connected!

**Absentee Shawnee Health System
Little Axe Clinic**
**15951 Little Axe Dr. Norman
OK 73026**

**Absentee Shawnee Health System
Shawnee Clinic**
**2029 S. Gordon Cooper Dr. Shawnee,
OK 74801**

**Absentee Shawnee Health System
PlusCare**
15951 Little Axe Dr. Norman

Phone Number
405-447-0300

Web Address
www.asthealth.org

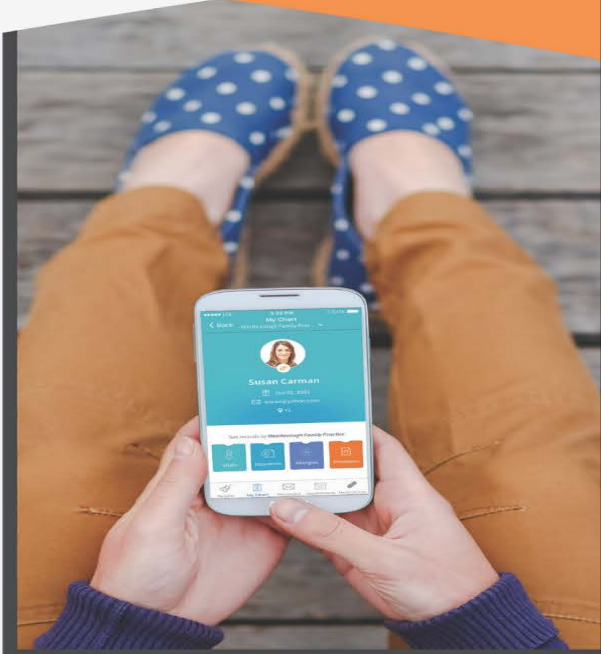
To access your account from the address above, click the Patient Portal link and enter your username and password.

Practice Code
JEDEBD

To access your account from the healow app, use the practice code above and enter your username and password.



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HEALTH SYSTEM
Prevention. Progress. Pride.
SHAWNEE CLINIC
LITTLE AXE HEALTH CENTER
PLUS CARE



ABSENTEE SHAWNEE TRIBAL
HEALTH SYSTEM
Prevention. Progress. Pride.

Scheduled Closures

**Dec. 3rd: Closed at NOON -
(PlusCare and Pharmacy
will re-open at 5pm)**

**Dec. 24th - Closed in
observance of Christmas Day**

**Dec. 25th - Closed in
observance of Christmas Day.**

*Follow us on Facebook or visit
asthealth.org for closure information and
updates!*





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WITH *self-care*
SUPPORT**



**15951
Little Axe Dr.
Norman, OK
73026**

 **405-701-7085**

 **405-233-0563**

Tribal Opioid Response (TOR)

October was a busy month for bringing awareness to issues that affect Indian country. Besides Breast Cancer Awareness Month, there was Domestic Violence Awareness, Substance Use and Misuse Prevention Awareness, and Red Ribbon Week.

To support victims of intimate partner violence and help bring awareness to the link between intimate partner violence and substance misuse, TOR set up at two domestic violence awareness events to share information about our resources: 1) Sac and Fox Victim Services Resource Fair, Stroud, OK and the AST Domestic Violence Awareness Event, Shawnee, OK

Substance misuse can involve illicit drugs or legal substances like prescription drugs, over the counter drugs, alcohol or nicotine. Victims of domestic violence or intimate partner violence (IPV) may be forced to misuse substances so their abuser can maintain power and control over them. Another common reason IPV victims misuse is to cope with trauma from their abuse. Abuse can be emotional, mental, spiritual or physical. If you or someone you know is in an abusive relationship, contact the AST Domestic Violence program, 405-273-2888, or the National Domestic Violence Hotline 1.800.799.2733 to find the resources nearest you.

What we choose to do on a daily basis forms a pattern. These daily choices serve as the foundation of our overall lifestyle. If you make healthy choices every day, however big or small, these form patterns which benefit you, your family and community. On the flip side, if you make unhealthy choices every day, these also form a pattern which can negatively impact you and everything around you. We’re human so we’re going to make some unhealthy choices but let’s make sure our healthy choices outweigh our unhealthy ones.

Through TOR prevention outreach we encourage our participants to think of the positive things we can do for ourselves to strengthen our resilience. The classes we offer are about creating community, increasing skills and knowledge, empowering individuals and inspiring change. We also offer training and educational classes. Reach out to **TOR@atribe.com** for more information.

Besides classes, TOR offers treatment and recovery services for American Indians who are enrolled citizens of a federally recognized tribe residing within our catchment area: Cleveland, Lincoln, Logan, Pottawatomie, and Oklahoma counties.

Next up is Red Ribbon week. This week was inspired by the life of U.S. Drug Enforcement Agent, Enrique Camarena. Camarena was investigating the drug trafficking operations of the Guadalajara cartel when he was kidnapped by several of their members and murdered. To celebrate his life and legacy, friends and family members began wearing red ribbons and pledged to live a drug-free lifestyle. This grassroots movement evolved into a national one which is recognized across the U.S. every last week of October. This week is a time to promote prevention - prevention reduces substance misuse and the demand for illegal drugs.

On October 23rd, TOR kicked off Red Ribbon week with a launch party at LA Clinic. Our next stop was Little Axe High School followed by Little Axe Middle School and ending with the AST After School Program at Brendle Corner. At each school location participants had a chance to spin the wheel for a prize after answering a true/false question. Each question prompted participants to think beyond what they knew about substance misuse.

As part of Red Ribbon week, Building Blocks III was gifted a banner so we could start getting our little ones and their parents in the mindset of modeling and living a healthy and safe lifestyle. And we captured several adorable photos of these tiny humans placing their hands on the banner. BB III staff also participated. Did you know zero to three are the formative years for our next generation? With positive experiences, a child’s mindset developed in this period can lead to greater motivation to achieve, better self-control and strengthen their ability to learn.

In wrapping up October, let’s remember to help one another. Our community is experiencing some rough patches. We can help one another by sharing resources, being kind and supportive and remembering to be humble.



Bailey Harris, Lead Epidemiologist and Coordination Specialist for the Strategic Prevention Framework and Partnerships for Success grant, operates the Red Ribbon Week Spin to Win game for Little Axe High School students.

Building Blocks III, Little Axe

Building Blocks III, Little Axe

Building Blocks III, Little Axe

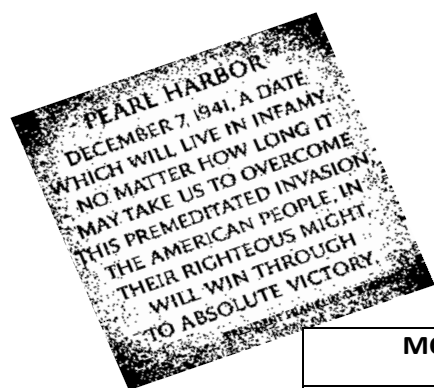
Taking the pledge at Little Axe Middle School



Building Blocks III, Little Axe

Twinning for Red Ribbon Week Twin Day at Little Axe High School

Jack Hartgrave looks on as a LA Middle School takes the pledge.



MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 CHICKEN POT PIE VEGGIES/BISCUIT FLUFF	2 SLOPPY JOE ONIONS/PICKLES POTATO SALAD MIXED FRUIT	3 TITLE VI CLOSED TOWN HALL MEETING	4 STEW CORNBREAD CHEESE STICKS COOKIE	5 OATMEAL TOAST APPLE SLICES
8 EGG ROLL STIR FRY VEGGIES FORTUNE COOKIE	9 BAKED CHICKEN WILD RICE SALAD BAR PEARS	10 SPAGHETTI W MEATSAUCE BROC/GARLIC BREAD PEACHES	11 RIBLET BAKED BEANS BREAD CRISP	12 SCRAMBLED EGGS SAUSAGE GRAVY BISCUIT
15 POLISH SAUSAGE CABBAGE BREAD FRUIT	16 BAKED POTATO CHEZ/ONIONS GREENBEANS PUDDING	17 MEATLOAF MASHED POT/GRAVY CARROTS JELL-O	18 HOT HAM & CHEZ MAC SALAD MANDARIN ORANGES	19 PANCAKES FRUIT SAUSAGE PATTIES
22 TITLE VI CLOSED FOR CLEANING	23 TITLE VI CLOSED FOR CLEANING	24 CHRISTMAS EVE	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS	26 TITLE VI CLOSED FOR CLEANING
29 BAKED FRIED CHICKEN PEAS N CARROTS SIDE SALAD* PEACHES	30 VEGGIE SOUP CRACKERS JELL-O	31 BEEF FINGERS MAC N CHEZ CAULIFLOWER FRUIT	MENU SUBJECT TO CHANGE* LUNCH IS SERVED FROM 11 AM TO 1PM BREAKFAST IS SERVED FROM 9AM TO 11AM SERVING AT THE SHAWNEE SITE AND LITTLE AXE RESOURCE CENTER	

Ensuring Hope

AST Health Fair

On October 3rd, the Ensuring Hope grant participated in the 2025 AST Fall Health Fair, setting up a colorful and inviting table filled with educational and outreach materials. Staff handed out over 100 bags packed with goodies, personal grooming kits, and manicure kits to community members and health system staff who stopped by to learn more about the program. The event provided a great opportunity to engage with attendees, share information about the Ensuring Hope initiative, and promote awareness of available behavioral health resources and prevention efforts within the community.



Pictured above are Jack Hartgrave (left), and Bailey Harris (right), manning their table at the 2025 AST Fall Health Fair.

Trunk or Treat

On October 23rd, the Ensuring Hope grant participated in the 2025 AST Trunk or Treat and Zombie Run event, held at Calypso Cove, bringing both fun and community engagement to the festivities. During the Trunk or Treat, staff handed out more than 175 goodie bags filled with toys, candy, and educational materials to excited trick-or-treaters and their families. At the Zombie Run, team members joined in the spooky fun by helping with zombie makeup and even taking on the role of zombies along the course. The event was a great opportunity to connect with community members of all ages while sharing prevention messages in a creative and memorable way.



Pictured above is the Ensuring Hope and TOR Trunk or Treat set-up.



Pictured above are Bailey Harris (left) and Michaela Tuberville (right) in their zombie makeup before the event.

RAW Luncheon

On November 6th, the Ensuring Hope staff attended the Recovery, Action, and Wellness (RAW) Luncheon held at Life.Church in Shawnee, where community members gathered to celebrate recovery and promote wellness. Grant staff hosted a resource table and distributed bags filled with educational materials and SWAG items to attendees. Following the resource fair, participants were invited into the auditorium to hear powerful recovery stories shared by individuals who have overcome challenges and are now thriving. The event provided a meaningful opportunity for connection, inspiration, and collaboration among community members, service providers, and advocates for recovery.



Pictured above is the Ensuring Hope table at the RAW Luncheon.

Diabetes and Wellness Program

The AST Health System's Diabetes and Wellness Program hosted its annual Zombie 5k Fun Run /1K Walk on October 23 at Lake Thunderbird State Park, bringing the community together for some spooktacular fun!

Participants of all ages laced up their sneakers, and some even showed off their best zombie costumes. The event is an opportunity to Ki Ke Ki Ka Mi Ge “Keep Moving” while having fun with family and friends. A huge thank you goes out to all the volunteers, participants who made this event a success.

Until next year-keep moving, stay healthy, and beware of zombies!



Behavioral Health

Whether you fancy, dress-up social festivities or a downhome country holiday, Christmas offers jingles, jangles, and ... well .. chaos from all kinds of angles. But it's the blues that often headlines this concert of emotions sponsored by The Holidays.

Nearly nine in 10 American adults experience stress during the holidays, according to a 2023 study by the American Psychological Association. That same study notes stress increases for 41 percent of Americans around Christmas.

In addition, the National Alliance on Mental Issues (NAMI) reports 64 percent of people experience declining mental health during the holidays.

While specific statistics linking Native American directly to ‘holiday blues’ are limited in available data, research consistently shows the American Indians experience significantly higher rates of serious psychological distress, depression, and suicide compared to the general population,” according to NAMI.

Reasons for The Blues

- NAMI reports 60 percent of people in the general population experience some adverse mental health effects during the holiday. Top reasons for holiday blues include:
- **Social and financial pressures:** The societal expectation is that gifts are exchanged for the holidays, but gifts cost money. That expectation can put extra financial burdens on people already struggling to pay for necessities.
 - **Unrealistic expectations:** People can sometimes feel pressure to feel joy and happiness during the holidays, despite circumstances. All around there are reminders to be festive and media messages conveying the idea that everyone is happy during this time. That can make people feel as though their experience falls short of expectations.
 - **Loneliness:** Some people are away from family and have no one to celebrate with. The holidays, with the attached expectations of gathering and festiveness, can heighten the sense of loneliness.
 - **Disrupted routine:** The kids are out of school, adults are trying to get time off, stores are crowded, and the same three Christmas songs keep playing. Nothing is as it is during the other 11 months, which necessitates adjustments. Hectic schedules can lead to fatigue.

Anyone, no matter the demographic, can experience the holiday blues, even if you have no history of depression or anxiety. However, people with underlying mental health conditions are at more risk.

How To Manage

Holiday blues can be managed, but it often takes intentionality to create a smooth holiday.

- **Set boundaries:** Determine what kind of behavior you will allow in your personal space and what kind of behavior must remain out of your personal space. Remember, you are responsible for what happens there, and if you allow someone to mess up your personal space, it will be you who is left with the cleanup.
- **Talk through your feelings:** Don't let your feelings fester. Express them appropriately with an appropriate, understanding person. Ignored and unattended emotions have a way of getting your attention eventually.
- **Stick to a budget:** Be proactive about your spending. Know how much you can realistically spend, and stay within that number.
- **Set realistic expectations:** Focus on creating your idea of a happy holiday. Don't let others define it for you.



Help Yourself → Help Your Tribe

SEE IF YOU QUALIFY FOR A PLAN AT NO COST TO YOU OR THE TRIBE

2026 Open Enrollment

Medicare: Oct 16 - Dec 7
Marketplace: Nov 1 - Jan 15

Did You Know?

- 60% of the cost to render care to tribal members comes from other payment sources outside of tribal funding?
- If you qualify for and enroll in a zero-cost plan, it helps PRC apply funding and deliver care to more people?
- When you participate in enrolling in insurance plans, it provides you with immediate access to specialized health care services?



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WWW.ASTHEALTH.ORG

