



Kanza News

April 2026





Letter From the Chair

Kaw Nation has welcomed spring and looking forward to summer. Now that spring has finally arrived, that means Graduation season is soon to come! If you or a family member will be graduating this year, be sure to send their photo and accomplishments to Karen Howe at KNES! And then can their accomplishment can be shared in the next newsletter! Team Tajé Sage has been gearing up for their upcoming competition at the annual Oklahoma Native American Youth Language Fair! These kids work hard and we are always so proud to see their final performances! The amount of confidence this builds within the youth is a beautiful process to witness. We wish them well at this year's competition! They will also be holding their 10th Youth Language Powwow this year! Save

the date for May 16th! This is another great event that helps build confidence along with culture and traditions. With the APRA funds winding down, we are thankful to have been able to restore buildings and do some much needed upgrades and new opportunities to provide for our people and communities. Change is on the horizon, with the upcoming election in September! It will be here quicker than the blink of an eye! Remember to be an active part of your tribe by voting in the upcoming election and join some boards and committees. The quarterly General Council meeting is April 12th and we will be introducing the candidates that have signed up to run for Chair, Secretary, TC seat 1 and TC seat 3. At the General Council meeting on July 12th, each candidate will have an opportunity to address the General Council.

Our 50th Powwow is this year and fast approaching! Be sure to save the date of August 7th, 8th, and 9th. The Powwow Committee has been busy working on making this a great celebration for everyone. Hope to see you there. The Greenhouses are running a little behind schedule, but we hope to be planting before May. Bidding for the Kaw One Stop building has officially begun. The plan is to renovate the building and transform it into a distribution center for our greenhouse items as well as additional products to sell and also add a laundromat. The Transportation Department has partnered with Kay County and currently has an active project of patch work and resurfacing 4 miles of Enterprise Road starting from Lake Road, up to Highway 11. In closing, I'd like to wish all Kaw Nation Citizens and their families the very best and look forward to all that's ahead with continued blessings.

Wiblahan,
-Kimberly Jenkins

KAW NATION STATE TRIBE AGREEMENT SURVEY

The Kaw Nation Social Services Department urges all Oklahoma Kaw Nation Tribal Citizens to complete a vital survey now. This effort supports ongoing collaboration with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS) on a state-tribe agreement for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. (LIHEAP).

LIHEAP, a federal initiative since 1981, aids low-income households—often at or below 150% of poverty—with heating, cooling, crisis aid, and weatherization. State-tribe pacts fairly allocate funds to tribes, overriding census defaults for better service on and off reservations.

Securing this deal unlocks funding to expand vital energy services for eligible citizens amid Kaw area's harsh winters. Take the survey today to amplify Kaw Nation's voice: www.kawnation.gov/liheap-mou-survey. Contact Social Services for details.

KAW NATION SOCIAL SERVICES: (580) 269-1186



OR SCAN QR CODE FOR ONLINE FORM



Certified 2026 Special Election Certified Results

OFFICIAL RESULTS
POSTED 03/04/2026 12:32PM

2026 Constitutional Amendment Election

Question No. 1. (Approved by Tribal Council Resolution No. 25-112).

Should the Kaw Nation Constitution Article IX: Election, Section 2 be amended to remove the requirement that candidates for Tribal Council possess at least one-thirty-second (1/32) Kaw Nation blood quantum?

YES: 103 NO: 38

Question No. 2. (Approved by Tribal Council Resolution No. 25-113).

Should the Kaw Nation Constitution Article IX: Election, Section 3 be amended to include a new subsection C stating that at no time shall (3) or more Immediate Family Members serve on Tribal Council at the same time?


YES: 134 NO: 7

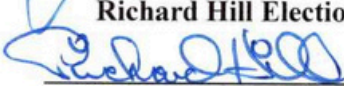
147 Registered Absentee Voters
36 Registered In-Person Voters
183 Total Registered Voters
% of Votes Required = 30%

116 Absentee Ballots Received
25 In-Person Ballots Received
141 Total Ballots Received
% of Votes Received = 77.04%


BOTH AMENDMENTS PASSED

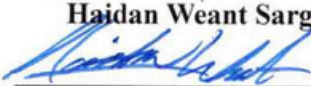
Chris Moon Election Board Commissioner



Richard Hill Election Board Member
 3-4-2026

Laura Rowton Election Board Secretary

 03/04/2026

Haidan Weant Sargent at Arms
 03-04-2026



KAW NATION

SOCIAL DANCE

APRIL 12TH, 2026

JOHNNIE RAY MCCAULEY COMMUNITY BUILDING
3251 E. RIVER RD. NEWKIRK, OK 74647

ROUND DANCING

3 PM

SUPPER

5 PM

INTERTRIBAL DANCING

7 PM

MC | **BRUCE JOHNSON**
HEADSINGER | **KRISTO REVARD**
HEADMAN | **SETH WARREN**
HEAD LADY | **KATZY BUFFALOHEAD**
AD | **CLAY DONELSON**
WATERBOYS | **JESUS LITTLEDEER**
HUNTER GOODNO
PRINCESSES | **JACEY PAPPAN**
BRANDY WOOD
TIGER WIHÈ JONES

POTLUCK DINNER -
BRING YOUR OWN
DISHES & CHAIRS -
CAKEWALK

COME DANCE WITH US
DIRECTLY AFTER THE
KAW NATION GENERAL
COUNCIL MEETING!
AND CHECK OUT OUR
NEWLY REMODELED
GYMNASIUM!

Concession
stand by:
Kaw Nation
Princess
Society



KAW NATION NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCIDENTS, INJURIES OR THEFT - NO ALCOHOL OR DRUGS ALLOWED

WINIKO: Reunions – The Spirit in All Things

The story of WINIKO and the Reunions program begins with a moment of recognition that bridged more than a century of separation between people and their cultural belongings. In 1995, James Pepper Henry, a Kaw Nation tribal citizen and descendant of James Pepper, was serving as the inaugural director of the Kanza Museum in Kaw City, Oklahoma. That same year, an opportunity emerged through the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, which had recently established an internship program for emerging Native museum professionals. The Smithsonian had acquired the vast Heye Foundation collection, a massive archive of more than 800,000 cultural items representing Indigenous peoples across the Western Hemisphere. These items were in the process of being relocated from New York to a new research facility in Maryland.

Pepper Henry joined the effort in the Bronx, where the collection was still organized through handwritten catalog cards, many created by George Heye himself. Heye, a wealthy collector, had spent decades acquiring Native cultural items under the belief that Indigenous lifeways would disappear. His collectors traveled widely, including to Oklahoma in the early twentieth century, where economic hardship forced many Native families, including the Kaw, to sell treasured belongings to survive. These transactions were recorded in detail, preserving names, prices, and descriptions, but separating the objects from their families for generations.

While reviewing these records, Pepper Henry noticed familiar Kaw family names, including his own. His search led him to a drawer in the collection where he encountered something deeply personal, an otter hide collar he had seen all his life in a historic photograph of the 1909 Kaw delegation to Washington, DC. The collar, worn by Mehojah in the photograph, had been sold shortly after that delegation returned home. Seeing it in person transformed an abstract collection into something living and relational. In that moment, Pepper Henry recognized that thousands of items in museum collections could be reconnected with the descendants of their original owners. This realization shaped his career and ultimately led to the development of WINIKO and its Reunions program. Over time, Pepper Henry advanced within the museum world, eventually leading repatriation efforts and advocating for greater access to collections for Native communities. He helped establish agreements that allowed cultural items to be loaned back to tribes, not as static displays, but as living connections to identity, knowledge, and tradition.

These ideas took form at the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City, where Pepper Henry later became the inaugural director. There, the WINIKO exhibition was created, drawing its name from a Caddo word meaning the spirit in all things. The exhibition features items from each of the thirty nine tribal nations in Oklahoma, many of which were originally collected during the early twentieth century. Central to this effort is the concept of reunions, which brings families face to face with items once owned by their ancestors. The Reunions program is designed to reconnect objects with the people and communities to whom they belong. It recognizes that these items carry not only historical value, but also cultural knowledge, spiritual meaning, and family stories. By facilitating these connections, the program benefits families, tribal nations, and institutions alike, creating new understanding and restoring relationships that had been interrupted for generations. Each reunion is carefully planned and deeply intentional. Families are invited to spend time with the items in a private setting, typically for two hours. During this time, they are encouraged to touch, examine, and engage with the objects, something rarely allowed in traditional museum



Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution [027092.000]. Photograph by NMAI Photo Services.



Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution [027092.000]. Photograph by NMAI Photo Services.



Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution [027092.000]. Photograph by NMAI Photo Services.



(Left) Jim Pepper Henry stands with William Mehojah while holding the Otter Collar. (Right) Jim Pepper Henry signs the Smithsonian loan agreement in 2007.



The last full blood Tribal Council, photographed during a Kaw delegation visit to Washington, DC, where Jesse Mehojah is shown wearing the otter collar. Top row, left to right, Forrest Chouteau, Almond R. Miller (United States Indian Agent) Silas Conn, Albert Taylor. Bottom row, left to right, Little Jim, Jim Pepper, Jesse Mehojah, Roy Munroe.

settings. Participants share stories, memories, and cultural knowledge, adding layers of meaning that cannot be captured in catalog records alone. Museum staff from both the First Americans Museum and the Smithsonian are present to support the experience and document the insights shared.

On January 30, 2026, a reunion focused on Kaw Nation families took place at the First Americans Museum. Descendants traveled from near and far to participate, bringing with them a sense of anticipation and reverence. The gathering was marked by gratitude and emotion as families encountered items connected to their lineage. Among the items presented was the otter collar collected in 1910 by Mark Raymond Harrington, with assistance from Chief William M Skye. The collar, complete with its tail and whiskers, was recognized as the same one worn by Jesse Mahojah in a historic photograph of the last full blood tribal council. His descendant, Justin Mehojah, attended with his family, experiencing a direct connection to his ancestor through the object. Also included were baby moccasins collected from Silas Conn in 1910. Former Tribal Council Chair Lynn Williams explained the significance of the beadwork covering the soles, noting that it symbolized a child so cherished that they would be carried rather than walk. A woman's blouse collected from Edward Mahojah in 1913 further illustrated the personal and cultural dimensions of these belongings. The event was guided by Heather Ahtone, director of curatorial affairs, who welcomed families and explained the process. She also sought consent for audio recording, emphasizing the importance of preserving the knowledge shared during the reunion. Earlier in the day, she expressed a simple but powerful belief that those who should be present would be there, a sentiment that resonated deeply as the gathering unfolded. Michelle Chouteau, the collections manager and registrar, played a key role in organizing the event. As a descendant of both Cheyenne and Kaw heritage, her presence added a meaningful layer to the experience. Attendees were moved to learn that someone helping facilitate the reunion also shared a direct connection to the story being told. Nicholas Coble, director of the Kaw Nation Museum, worked closely with the First Americans Museum and participating families to coordinate the reunion. His involvement reflected a broader commitment to ensuring that these efforts remain grounded in community relationships.

WINIKO and the Reunions program represent a shift in how museums engage with Native collections. Rather than treating objects as isolated artifacts, they are understood as living links to people, history, and identity. Through these reunions, items once separated by circumstance are brought back into relationship, restoring not only access, but meaning.



Justin Mehojah and his family stand beside the otter collar, a cherished symbol worn with pride by generations of their ancestors.



The Conn family cherishes and holds the baby moccasins once worn by earlier generations of their family.



Clearing the Way: Kaw Nation Land Management's Lakeside Land Renewal

Kaw Nation Land Management, under the leadership of its dedicated department director, has transformed the wooded acreage adjacent to the administrative complex in Kaw City. Over recent seasons, this ambitious project has delivered key benefits: reduced fire risk through strategic timber reduction, healthier remaining trees with improved light and nutrient access, and enhanced aesthetics with increased lake views. Tackling a substantial volume of timber, the team provided multiple seasons of free firewood to tribal citizens, while unusable portions were piled and burned under controlled conditions on county-approved days, recycling nutrients into the soil, controlling invasives, and further curbing wildfire fuel. This large-scale effort showcases one facet of the department's broad portfolio, managing diverse Kaw Nation properties across the region with sustainable practices that prioritize community and ecological health.



TAJÉ SAGE / KAAⁿZE IE YOUTH 10TH ANNUAL POWOW!

\$3,400 IN
CASH PRIZES!



**SATURDAY
MAY 16TH 2026**

12613 E Furguson Ave Kaw City, OK

Gourd Dance @ 2pm ♦ Specials Afternoon Only ♦

Tiny Tots ♦ Supper @ 5pm ♦ Powwow @ 7pm

HEADSTAFF

HEAD MAN:

Clay Donelson

HEAD LADY:

Shaylynn Littlecook

HEAD SINGER:

Isaac Williams

HEAD GOURD DANCERS:

Antwine & William Hamilton

M.C.:

Colt Donelson & Nick Williams

A.D.:

Damien Littledeer Sr. & Dylan Bellmard

INCOMING TAJÉ SAGE PRINCESS:

Irene Spotted Bear

OUTGOING TAJÉ SAGE PRINCESS:

Tiger "Wihé" Jones

HEAD COOK:

Maudie Jones

WATER BOYS:

Declan Clark & Christopher Moorhead

CONTESTS

SHÍDOHÍNGA / BOYS 7-12

1ST \$300 ♦ 2ND \$200 ♦ 3RD \$100

SHÍDOHÍNGA / BOYS 13-17

1ST \$300 ♦ 2ND \$200 ♦ 3RD \$100

SHÍMÍHÍNGA / GIRLS 7-12

1ST \$300 ♦ 2ND \$200 ♦ 3RD \$100

SHÍMÍHÍNGA / GIRLS 13-17

1ST \$300 ♦ 2ND \$200 ♦ 3RD \$100

SPECIALS

GIRLS CLOTH 13-17

\$500 - WINNER TAKE ALL

BOYS STRAIGHT 13-17

\$500 - WINNER TAKE ALL

SPONSORED BY KNES

Tapóska / Kaaⁿze Íe Director - Storm Brave ♦ Office: 580-269-2739 ♦
langdir@kawnation.gov ♦ Mobile: 580-716-6622

VENDORS Contact: BRIDGET HOWE
♦ (580)-749-5420

Special Thanks To
Kaw Nation Education Services

No Alcohol, No Drugs. Kaw Nation not responsible for accidents



Building for the Future: Kaw Nation Marks ARPA-Funded Successes



The transformation of the lot next to the Kaw Nation Justice Center in Kaw City, showing the original metal building, its demolition, and the construction of the new covered arbor that stands there today.

As the American Rescue Plan Act Fiscal Recovery Funds program comes to a close, Kaw Nation reflects on the many initiatives and projects made possible through this historic investment in our community. Under the leadership of Tribal Council Chair Kim Jenkins during her four-year term, these funds allowed the Nation to strengthen infrastructure, expand services, and enhance quality of life for Tribal Citizens. Highlights include the distribution of meat bundles to Kaw Citizens during the holiday season,

bringing nourishment and community connection, and extensive renovations at McCauley Gymnasium, including new flooring, paint, court surfacing, and spectator stands. The Union Street property in Ponca City was purchased and fully renovated to serve as the Kaw Nation Resource Center, providing vital services to the community. Kanza Clinic received upgrades including new flooring, paint, a remodeled reception, and additional offices, while new windows were installed at the Kanza Wellness Center swimming



Left: Formerly an RV park in Kaw City, the property shows the early stages of greenhouse construction following Kaw Nation's acquisition. Middle: Tribal Council members celebrate the groundbreaking ceremony, marking the start of the property's transformation into a greenhouse community. Right: Completed greenhouses, symbolizing a promising future for this Kaw Nation initiative

pool. Headquarters also saw exterior improvements and upgraded windows. Construction of greenhouses in Kaw City, renovations to the Council House at the Powwow Grounds, new sod and a First Aid building at the grounds, and Percussion Park at the Kanza Library and Learning Center were completed. The Gaming Commission now operates from the newly purchased Bank Building in Braman, OK. Cemetery enhancements included a new fence and sign. A new Covered Picnic Area replaced the former structure next to the Kaw Nation Justice Center, and the One

Stop gas station building was acquired and will soon be renovated into a Laundromat and Distribution Center. Many other properties saw fresh paint, new flooring, and thoughtful upgrades. These accomplishments were made possible through the dedicated decision-making of the Tribal Council, the skilled work of contractors, and the commitment of the Nation's departments and staff. Together, these projects reflect Kaw Nation's ongoing commitment to growth, wellness, and the well-being of all Citizens



Left: Fresh sod, harvested that day, ready to bring new life to the Powwow Arena in Kaw City. Middle: The newly renovated Kaw Nation Council House, prepared to serve the community for generations to come. Right: Participants enjoy a handgame fundraiser inside the Council House, benefiting from the renewed space."

KAW NATION

PRESENTS
-2026-

WASHUNGA DAYS POWWOW

- JUNE 20TH & 21ST -

Allegawaho Park - 1645 S. 525 Rd. Council Grove, KS

HEAD STAFF

Head Singer **Jordan Jones** | Head Man **Dylan Bellmard** | Head Lady **Jacey Pappan**
Master of Ceremonies **Ken Bellmard** | Arena Director **Damien Littledeer**
Water Carriers **Bear Donelson, Maxwell Brave McConnell**

ALL KAW MISSION ACTIVITIES ARE FREE, OPEN TO THE PUBLIC,
AND PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OUR SPONSORS:

FRIENDS OF KAW HERITAGE - CITY OF COUNCIL GROVE - AREA FOUNDATIONS - KAW NATION

FOOD, ARTS, & CRAFTS SPACES AVAILABLE FOR VENDORS

To inquire about becoming a vendor, reach out to Kaw Nation Headquarters: (580) 269-2552

6:00PM - 7:00PM REGISTRATION | 7:30PM GRAND ENTRY

FRIDAY:

Tiny Tots Ages: 6 & Under

Jr. Boys & Girls Ages: 7-17

Boys: Straight, Traditional, Fancy & Grass

Girls: Cloth, Buckskin, Fancy Shawl, & Jingle



SATURDAY:

Sr. Men & Women Ages 18-54

Men: Straight, Traditional, Fancy & Grass

Men & Women Golden Age 55 & Older

Women: Cloth, Buckskin, Fancy Shawl & Jingle

Directions: From Council Grove, head South on Dunlop Road, then turn left onto X Avenue, then left onto South 525 Road. The arbor will be on the left in 0.5 miles. Watch for signs.

The area beneath the arbor is used for dancing and ceremonies. The area is called the arena. For the Kaá'ze Nikashí'ga (Kaw People), the arena is a sacred place. The ground has been blessed by the spiritual leaders. Photographs may be taken during the powwow but please ask permission before taking photos of the individuals.

NO DRUGS OUR ALCOHOL ALLOWED. NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THEFT, ACCIDENTS, OR INJURIES



Kaw Nation Election Board

Notice of General Election – September 13, 2026

Notice of General Election

Election Date: September 13, 2026

Citizens of the Kaw Nation are hereby notified that a General Election will be held September 13, 2026, for the purpose of filling the following positions: Chair, Secretary, Tribal Council Member #1, and Tribal Council Member #3. The Election is conducted in accordance with Article IX, pursuant to Section 4 of the Constitution of the Kaw Nation, ratified on August 20th, 2011, and as amended on April 29th, 2016.

Polling Place

Kaw Nation Administration Building, 698 Grandview Drive, Kaw City, OK 74641

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Purpose: To vote on candidates for filling the positions of Chair, Secretary, Tribal Council Member #1, and Tribal Council Member #3.

Candidate Filing Date

March 16th – March 20th, 2026

Kaw Nation Administration Building, 698 Grandview Drive, Kaw City, OK 74641

8:00AM – 4:00 PM

Voter Qualifications

A qualified voter must: (1) be an enrolled citizen of the Kaw Nation; (2) be 18 years of age or older on the date of the election; (3) not have been adjudged mentally incompetent by a court of competent jurisdiction.

A Qualified Voter List will be posted on **September 8th, 2026**, at the Kaw Nation Administration Building at Kaw City, OK, the Kanza Health Clinic at Newkirk, OK, and the Housing Authority at Newkirk, OK.

Candidate Filing Fees

At the time of filing the Declarations of Candidacy, candidates must also pay a non-refundable filing fee of three hundred dollars (\$300.00). Filing fees must be paid in money order or certified check. **Personal checks will not be accepted.**

Voting Methods

IN PERSON: Kaw Nation Administration Building, Kaw City, OK, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM

ABSENTEE: Voters may request an Absentee Ballot from the Election Board by written request containing the voter's signature or completion of an Absentee Ballot Request Form, available on the Kaw Nation Website. Upon receipt of such request, the Election Board shall mail an Absentee Ballot to the requester. **Requests** for an Absentee Ballot must be received by the Election Board by **August 14th, 2026**. Please send the written request containing the voter's signature or the Absentee Ballot Request Form to:

By mail: Kaw Nation Election Board
P.O. Box 48
Kaw City, OK 74641

By email: electionboard@kawnation.gov

Or by fax: Kaw Nation Election Board - 580-269-1195

Ballots must be returned by postal mail to the above address, no later than September 11th, 2026. Absentee ballots will not be accepted in person or at any other location.

Election Results

Immediately following the tabulation of the ballots, the Election Board shall issue an unofficial canvas of the Election results at the Kaw Nation Administration Building. The Election Board shall issue the Certified Election Results after the expiration of the protest period at 12:00 PM on September 16th, 2026, or after the resolution of any challenges received by the Election Board, whichever is later. Certified Election Results will be posted at the Kaw Nation Administration Building and on the Kaw Nation website.

Update From Kaw Nation Social Services

As many of you may be aware, our Injury Prevention Program grant has recently concluded and is no longer active. Kaw Nation Social Services has since assumed responsibility for the program's medical equipment inventory, along with several additional items. We are pleased to offer these resources to Kaw Tribal Citizens, including car seats, diaper bags, walkers, canes, toilet seat risers, bathtub safety rails, shower chairs, grab bars, bed assist rails, toilet safety rails, and more. To request an item or learn more, please contact our Social Services Department at **(580) 269-1186** or visit us at the Administration Building, 698 Grandview Drive in Kaw City.

New Kaw Nation Hires

Welcome to the Team!

Alexandria Coker: Pharmacy Clerk
Isaac Brunton: KNES Education Specialist
Andrea Bradley: CSS Financial Specialist
Jaymee Armstrong: Daycare Teacher
Megan Ramsey: Women's Health LPN
Joshua Anhtony Jr.: Wellness Clerk
Maranda Chace: Daycare Teacher
Charity Duncan: Admin. Receptionist
Vandy Hamrick: HR Assistant/Benefits Coordinator
Quentin Geoff Stigers: Insurance Processor
Olivia Olvera: Wellness Clerk
Cortni Chapman: Daycare Teacher
Darren Clark: Maintenance Worker
Elizabeth Post: KNES Office Manager
Sierra McRae: KNES Education Specialist



In Loving Memory

Of Our Kaw Tribal Citizens

RICHARD LEWIS BURTON
DOD: 12/05/2025

PAUL DEVIN PRESTON
DOD: 1/24/2026

LIZETTE INEZ BARGER
DOD: 2/18/2026

CLAUDE BENNETT CLARK
DOD: 2/21/2026

LAWRENCE MARVIN BURTON
DOD: 3/01/2026

ROBERT JEFFERSON KELLER
DOD: 11/01/2025



698 Grandview Drive
P.O. Box 50
Kaw City, OK 74641
Phone: 580-269-2552
Fax: 580-269-1157

Visit Our Website:
www.KawNation.gov

Editor & Design:
Lonnie Doyle
communications@kawnation.gov

**VOTED BEST CASINO
IN KAY COUNTY
3 YEARS IN A ROW!**



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Journal-Tribune**

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ROCK & BREWS
CASINO

