Kanza News

October 2026



Letter From the Chair



Dear Kaw Nation Citizens,

It is with profound gratitude and humility that I take the oath of office as Chairman of the Kaw Nation. I am deeply honored by the trust placed in me. Although I ran unopposed, I do not regard this office as something automatically given. Leadership must be earned every day through service, integrity, accountability, and respect for the people of the Kaw Nation. I accept this responsibility knowing that the office of Chairman belongs not to any one individual, but to the Nation and its citizens.

Our ancestors endured removal, hardship, displacement, and repeated efforts to separate us from our lands, culture, and identity. Yet our ancestors persevered. Because of their courage, we are here today as a sovereign tribal nation, proud of who we are and determined to shape our own future.

As we begin this next chapter, I believe our greatest strength will be found in our solidarity. We will not always agree on every issue, nor should we expect to. Honest differences are part of healthy government. But disagreement must never become division, and politics must never become more important than our responsibility to one another. We are all members of one Nation. We share a common history, a common identity, and a common responsibility to those who will come after us.

Over the next four years, I will work to bring our citizens together around the values and priorities we share. I will listen respectfully to differing perspectives, encourage open communication, and seek common ground. Every Kaw citizen should know that their voice matters, whether they live near our tribal headquarters or hundreds of miles away.

To the employees of the Kaw Nation: you are essential to the success of our government and to the well-being of our citizens. You are often the first point of contact for the people we serve. Your professionalism, knowledge, compassion, and commitment directly affect the lives of Kaw families.

My expectation is that our workplace will be grounded in respect, cooperation, accountability, and service. We must treat one another with dignity. We must communicate honestly. We must work across departments as one team, united by the understanding that our ultimate purpose is to serve the Kaw people. I will strive to provide clear leadership, support our employees, and create a culture in which good work is recognized, and every person is treated fairly.

I look forward to working with a new Tribal Council. Effective government requires collaboration. No chairman and no council member can or should govern alone. We must work together in good faith, communicate openly, respect our constitutional responsibilities, and make decisions according to what best serves the Kaw Nation. There may be times when we see issues differently, but I will always approach the Tribal Council with respect and with a sincere desire to find constructive solutions.

The challenges before us are real. Our citizens have needs that cannot be met through promises alone. Resources must be carefully managed. Opportunities must be thoughtfully evaluated. Trust must be strengthened through transparency, accountability, and results.

As Chairman, I will not promise that every decision will be easy or that every challenge will be resolved immediately. I do promise that I will work hard, listen carefully, act honestly, and always remember whom I serve.

Today is not simply the beginning of a new administration. It is an opportunity for renewed unity, renewed confidence, and renewed commitment to the Kaw Nation.

Let us move forward together, not as separate groups or competing interests, but as one people. Let us honor our ancestors through our actions. Let us provide for our citizens today while building greater opportunities for those who will follow us tomorrow. I am grateful to my family and to everyone who has encouraged, advised, and supported me. Most of all, I am grateful to the citizens of the Kaw Nation for the opportunity to serve.

I accept this responsibility with humility, optimism, and an unwavering commitment to our people. The challenges ahead will require courage, cooperation, and perseverance, but I have great confidence in what we can accomplish together. May we always remember who we are, where we come from, and the responsibility we carry for future generations. Thank you. It is the honor of my life to serve as Chairman of the Kaw Nation. May the Kaw Nation move forward in unity, strength, and prosperity.

Wiblaha^{n},
-James Pepper Henry, Chairman

KAW NATION
SEPTEMBER 13, 2026
GENERAL COUNCIL ELECTION

OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS

CANDIDATE MUST REACH AT LEAST 51% COUNT IN THEIR FAVOR TO AVOID RUNOFF ELECTION

Kaw Nation Chairperson		**Running Unopposed**	
TOTAL VOTES: _150_	☒	**James Pepper Henry**	_150__
Secretary RUN OFF: Oct 18, 2026		**3 Candidates**	
TOTAL VOTES: _181_	☐	**Phylicia Arnswald**	_90_/__49.72_%
Phylicia Arnswald	☐	**Little Carol Clark**	_32_/_17.67_%
Lynn Williams	☐	**Lynn Williams**	_59__/_32.59__%
Seat #1 RUN OFF: Oct 18, 2026		**3 Candidates**	
TOTAL VOTES: _180_	☐	**Bogahdah "Bo" Ball**	65_/_36.11__%
Bogahdah "Bo" Ball	☐	**Lonnie Doyle**	34_/_18.88__%
Skyler Mathews	☐	**Skyler Mathews**	_81__/_45___%
Seat #3 RUN OFF: Oct 18, 2026		**3 Candidates**	
TOTAL VOTES: _179_	☐	**Nicholas Coble**	_86__/_48.04__%
Nicholas Coble	☐	**Kaydee Vap**	_49_/_27.37__%
Kaydee Vap	☐	**James "Jim" Warren**	__44__/_24.58_%

CANDIDATE MUST REACH AT LEAST 51% COUNT IN THEIR FAVOR TO AVOID RUNOFF ELECTION

ABSENTEE VOTES RECEIVED: __ 73_____
WALK-IN VOTES RECEIVED: __110_____
TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES = _ 183_____

September 16, 2026 12:01PM
Date of Official Results

9-16-26
CHRIS MOON – COMISIIONER

9-16-26
HAIDAN WEANT – SGT AT ARMS

9/16/26
RICHARD HILL - TELLER

9.16.26
LAURA ROWTON - CLERK

Kaw Nation Maintenance Builds on Progress

Led by Director Scott Rennie, the Kaw Nation Maintenance Department continues to take on larger projects while keeping up with the daily work that keeps Tribal facilities and grounds running smoothly.

One recent improvement is the installation of new flagpoles at the cemetery grounds. The display creates a dignified focal point, honoring Tribal ancestors, veterans, elders, and loved ones laid to rest. Flying the Nation's flag also affirms Kaw identity and pride, offering families a visible reminder of connection and belonging as they visit. Beyond improving the appearance of the grounds, the flagpoles reflect the Nation's ongoing commitment to remembrance and its responsibility to care for these meaningful places.

The department also tackled the removal of a defunct ice dispensing structure. Using Nation owned equipment and trained staff, the crew coordinated its safe and responsible removal. All stainless steel was recycled, and the department is exploring whether the ice maker portion could serve a useful purpose within an existing Kaw Nation asset.

These projects show the value of having a maintenance team within the Nation. An internal department gives Tribal leadership greater control over facilities, infrastructure, priorities, and resources while reducing reliance on outside contractors. Staff members bring familiarity with the properties they maintain and continuity that helps guide repairs, preserve equipment, and extend the life of buildings and infrastructure. Their ability to respond when needs arise also helps reduce avoidable downtime. Whether caring for cemetery grounds, removing unused structures, or handling everyday repairs, Rennie and his crew continue putting the Nation's resources to work with care, practicality, and a clear focus on the community they serve each and every day.





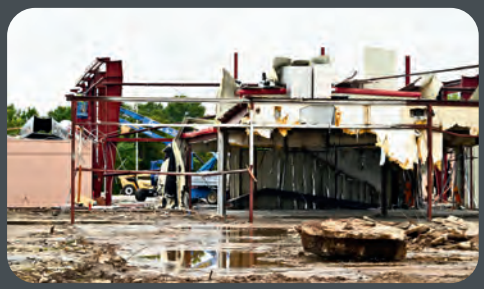




Exciting KNI Development on the Horizon

Residents traveling along L.A. Cann Road in Newkirk may have noticed a change: the former South Wind Casino has been demolished. While the familiar building is gone, plans are moving forward for a new use of the site and new opportunities for the community. Behind the scenes, Kaw Nation Industries has been working with a partner to bring a manufacturing center to the area. The partner's name and additional project details will be shared in a formal announcement soon.

The development is expected to create approximately 65 local jobs, with a preference for Kaw Nation citizens. Those anticipated positions represent an opportunity to support local families while strengthening economic growth and workforce development within the community. For now, the demolition marks a visible step toward something new. Much of the planning has taken place out of public view, but the goal is taking shape: bringing jobs and manufacturing activity to the area. Watch for the upcoming announcement as Kaw Nation Industries shares more about this development.





From Oath to Action: Pepper Henry Begins Term as Chairman

Following the Kaw Nation General Election, James Pepper Henry took his oath of office as Chairman before an audience of Tribal Council members, Kaw Nation citizens, friends, and family. The ceremony marked the beginning of a new chapter in his service to the Nation. In the presence of a Kaw Nation Justice, Pepper Henry pledged to uphold the Kaw Nation Constitution and laws, as well as the United States Constitution. His oath also included a commitment to carry out his responsibilities with honesty, integrity, and the Nation's best interests at heart.

After taking the oath, he delivered a meaningful speech to those gathered before signing the Official Oath of Office. It was a moment that brought the





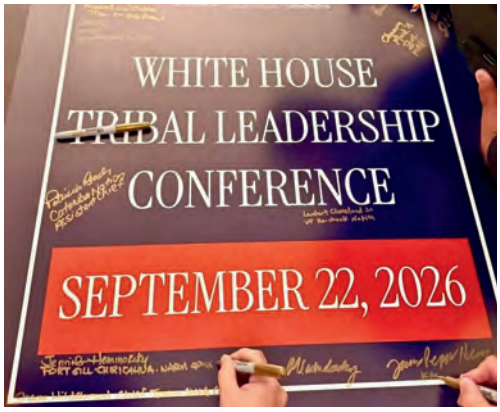


formal responsibilities of leadership together with the personal connections of family, friendship, and community.

Pepper Henry brings a distinctive combination of experience to the chairmanship, with a background spanning Tribal governance, cultural preservation, and executive leadership of major institutions. That experience connects closely with the practical responsibilities of leading a Tribal Nation.Both roles call for careful stewardship, accountability, and planning for the future. They also require respect for the people whose trust makes the work possible. As Chairman, those responsibilities now center on serving Kaw citizens and helping guide the Nation's priorities.

There was little pause between the ceremony and the work ahead. Pepper Henry quickly traveled to Washington, D.C., to attend the White House Tribal Leadership Conference, joining Tribal leaders and senior United States government officials for discussions about issues affecting Tribal Nations, their citizens, and their sovereignty. The trip placed him in conversations with federal officials early in his term, carrying Kaw Nation's perspective into a national setting.





Kaw Nation Represented at ATALM 2026 in Spokane

Kaw Nation's newly elected Chairman, James Pepper Henry, was honored to represent the Kaw Nation and serve as co host for the general sessions at the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums 2026 conference in Spokane, Washington. The conference paid tribute to ATALM founder and President and CEO Susan Feller, who passed away earlier this year. More than 1,200 attendees from across the United States, Canada, and the Pacific Islands gathered for the event. Congratulations were extended to this year's Guardian Award winners. Melissa Brodt and her team did an amazing job organizing and facilitating the conference. Chairman Pepper Henry also thanked co host Shana Bushyhead Condill and Dr. Sven Haakanson for documenting the event through his outstanding photography. It was great to reconnect with friends and former colleagues, and Chairman Pepper Henry is already looking forward to next year's conference in Reno, Nevada.







Credits: Sven Haakanson, Chris Tallbear, Yancey William Burns

KNED Connects Students with the World Around Them



The Kaw Nation Environmental Department recently welcomed sixth through eighth grade students from Shidler Middle School for an outdoor learning experience focused on caring for the land and water. At the Kaw Nation Powwow grounds, students explored how stewardship connects to the world around them.

Each student received a T shirt, wildlife handbook, drawstring bag, reusable water bottle, binoculars, and notebook to support their outdoor exploration. These supplies gave students tools to take a closer look at nature, record their observations, and continue exploring beyond the day's activities.

The outdoor classroom offered a setting where lessons about healthy ecosystems could connect with the landscape itself. Rather than only reading about natural resources,





students had opportunities to observe the plants, wildlife, and water around Kaw Lake and consider why caring for these resources matters.

Water testing brought another part of the lesson into focus. Students gained hands on experience, helping make the subject more tangible. Exploring local flora and fauna also encouraged them to notice the variety of life around them and think about the importance of maintaining healthy places for it.

For the department's team, teaching young people about stewardship is an important part of protecting the environment. Their message is straightforward: everyone has a role to play. Introducing that idea early gives students a chance to see environmental responsibility as something they can practice, not just something they hear about in a classroom. The experience also joined



SCAN QR CODE FOR
KNED ENVIRONMENTAL HANDBOOK

together school lessons with the natural resources that help sustain their communities. Water and land became more than subjects to study. They were part of a familiar landscape that students could explore, appreciate, and begin to understand in a different way.

By making room for learning outdoors, the Kaw Nation Environmental Department invested in both education and environmental responsibility. The day offered students a starting point for building a lasting connection with nature and recognizing that caring for their surroundings is a shared responsibility. That connection is at the heart of the department's work to help the next generation appreciate and protect the places around them.









50th Annual Kaw Nation Powwow

The Kaw Nation celebrated its 50th annual Powwow August 7, 8, and 9, marking half a century of gathering to honor a living cultural tradition. The milestone offered a chance to celebrate the present while remembering the generations who helped carry these traditions forward.

Bruce Johnson served as MC, Kirk Shaw as Arena Director, and Scott George as Head Singer. The Blackbeard Descendants served as Host Gourd Clan, with Fred Jones as Head Man and Katzy Buffalohead as Head Lady.

Water Boys Declan Clark, Sage Goddard, Thomas Spottedbear, and Kolter Weatherly helped support the gathering. Jessa Mehojah was the incoming Kaw Nation Princess.

Beyond the anniversary, the powwow offered an opportunity to consider the next 50 years. Keeping this tradition strong means encouraging young people to participate, supporting cultural education, and making room for future generations to learn songs and traditions.

Those questions connect the celebration to the Nation's future. A lasting tradition depends on people willing to share what they know and young people given opportunities to listen, learn, and take part.

As the Nation marked this anniversary, its meaning reached beyond a number. Fifty years represents a shared commitment to culture, community, and the generations still to come.

Contest Winners



JR. GIRLS CLOTH
1ST - EMARIE STANDSBLACK
2ND - LAMIYAH WATERBIRD MOORE
3RD - SHAYLYNN LITTLECOOK



JR. GIRLS BUCKSKIN
1ST - AMANDA TWO HATCHETT
2ND - IPHIRA TWO HATCHETT
3RD - STORMY BEGS-HIS-OWN



JR. GIRLS JINGLE/FANCY
1ST - AJAY HALL
2ND - TRISTINE GRANT
3RD - ANIYAH WARRIOR



JR. BOYS STRAIGHT
1ST - IZHINKE JACOBS
2ND - DAVYN ECHO-HAWK
3RD - ROZEN REDHWK MOORE



JR. BOYS TRADITIONAL GRASS
1ST - WALKING TURTLE LITTLECOOK
2ND - TAYLEN SIGWING



JR. BOYS FANCY
1ST - SYDNEY MOORE
2ND - URIAH PRIMEAUX
3RD - JAXON ENLOE



TEEN GIRLS CLOTH
1ST - NORA FEATHERS
2ND - MASH-TA LITTLECOOK
3RD - ARIANA HARLAN



TEEN GIRLS BUCKSKIN
1ST - DANESSA TWO-HATCHETT
2ND - SAVANNAH DREADFULWATER
3RD - LANEY LEFTHAND



TEEN GIRLS JINGLE/FANCY
1ST - CEDAR LITTLECOOK
2ND - MIYAH LITTLECOOK
3RD - LILLIAN MCCARTHY



TEEN BOYS STRAIGHT
1ST - QUENTIN BELL
2ND - DARIEN WEST
3RD - RYLAN GOODFOX



TEEN BOYS TRADITIONAL/GRASS
1ST - HAYDEN HOCKLEY
2ND - TRISTAN GRANT
3RD - LEVI SPOTTEDHORSECHIEF



TEEN BOYS FANCY
1ST - PETE MOON
2ND - CHARLIE RICE



GOLDEN AGE WOMEN'S
1ST - DELAINE ALLEY
2ND - TONYA MOORE
3RD - JENNY RUSH-BUFFALOHEAD



SR. WOMEN'S CLOTH
1ST - CHARLSIE CALLS HIM
2ND - MARLENE ENLOE
3RD - BLAKE CUNNINGHAM



SR. WOMEN'S BUCKSKIN
1ST - GRAISON YELLOWFISH
2ND - CRESENCIA TWO-HATCHETT
3RD - MARIA CORNELL

Contest Winners Continued



SR. WOMEN'S JINGLE/FANCY

1ST - TERANNE SPOTTEDBEAR
2ND - TEHYA BERT
3RD - TASHINA SMITH



GOLDEN AGE MEN'S

1ST - PETE MOORE JR.
2ND - TUFFY CHAINO
3RD - BOB KEKAHBAH



SR. MEN'S TRADITIONAL/GRASS

1ST - LOUIE SAGE
2ND - DONNIE GRANT
3RD - MARTY THURMAN



SR. MEN'S STRAIGHT

1ST - BATT DERION
2ND - RON RICE JR.
3RD - EDDY HARRIS



SR. MEN'S FANCY

1ST - THUNDER LIEB
2ND - TYLER THURMAN
3RD - SKUSH MCCLELLAN

Kaw Youth Share Language and Pride in Newkirk



Kaw Nation language students brought their voices and community pride to Charlie Adams Day in Newkirk this past September. Returning by invitation, the Kaá^ze Youth Language Team shared an important part of Kaw identity with neighbors, friends, and supporters gathered for the celebration.

The group included Tajé Sage Princess Irene Spotted Bear, Kaw Nation Princess Jessa Mi^xóje/Mehojah, the Tajé Sage Youth Drum Group, and Tajé Sage Dancers. Together, they spoke their Kaá^ze Íe loud and proud, bringing their language learning into a public setting where the community could celebrate alongside them. Beyond the celebration, the students' participation reflected the deeper purpose of their work. Each opportunity to speak and perform in the Kaw language helps carry their people's heritage forward while honoring those who came before them.





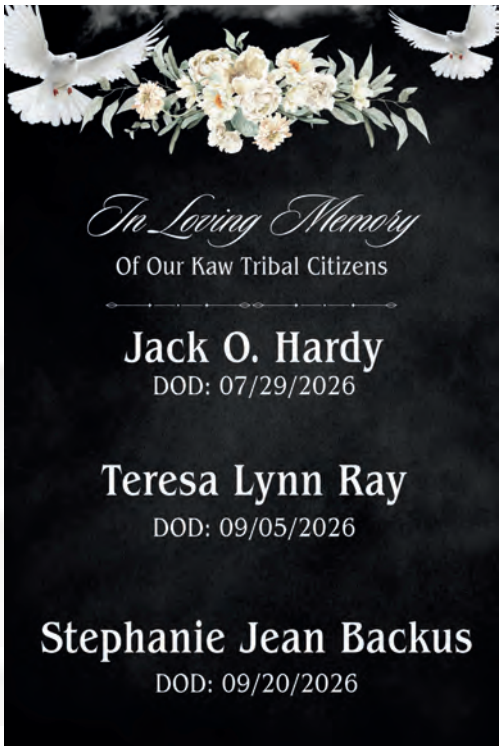
For the Newkirk community, the performance offered a chance to share in that pride. For the students, it was another opportunity to use their language together and show that Kaw traditions remain a living part of the community today.

NEW KAW NATION HIRES

We are excited to introduce the newest employees of Kaw Nation, who bring a wealth of talent and expertise to our team as we continue to serve and uplift our community.

- **Destiny Webster:** Court Clerk
- **Lily Richards:** Wellness Clerk
- **Tatum Dexter:** IT Specialist
- **Stacey Wilson:** Background Investigator
- **Brylee Thompson:** Daycare Teacher
- **Nora Summitt:** Women's Health LPN
- **Greg Thomas:** Police Officer
- **Lisa Bagg:** KNES Education Specialist
- **Grey Darling:** EPA Technician
- **William Adams:** Wellness Clerk PT
- **Dakota Pratt:** Tribal Youth Program Coordinator
- **Kesha Hollis:** Union Janitor
- **Sharilyn Irwin:** LPN
- **Ashlie Langhorst:** Daycare Teacher

580-269-2552 **kawnation.gov/careers** 698 Grandview Dr. Kaw City, OK 74641



KNES 3RD ANNUAL BACK TO SCHOOL BASH







Kaw Nation Education Services welcomed families to its third annual Back to School Bash, serving 330 students with supplies and plenty of fun. Kids enjoyed jump houses, games, and free ice cream while DJ Bravehorse, Pawnee, provided music and entertainment. Free hamburgers and drinks were also served.

Students received backpacks, school supplies, and gift cards for additional needs. Kaw ICW provided toys, adding another treat for students.

Parents could register for the Parent Committee and visit a resource fair featuring Kanza Library and Learning Center, Kaw Nation Child Support, and KNPD.

For families unable to attend, KNES later held a drive thru distribution at the Kaw Nation Resource Center, giving parents another opportunity to pick up remaining supplies and prepare their children for the classroom.

RECENT KAW GRADUATES

Congratulations to the newest college graduates among our Kaw Nation citizens! Your hard work and dedication deserve to be celebrated. Kaw Nation Education Services offers resources to support citizens pursuing higher education and help them along their own graduation journey. **Reach out today: (580)-749-5420**



BRANDEN LEARNED

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

GRADUATED CUM LAUDE
HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT & HEALTH INFORMATICS



LINDA SAHUAQUI

NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN MANAGEMENT & GENERAL BUSINESS



JOSHUA TAYLOR

EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY

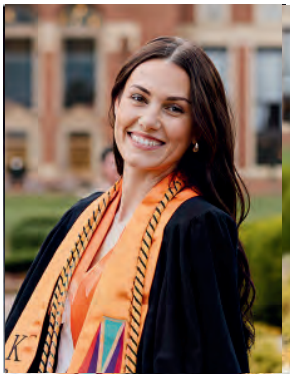
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN AERONAUTICAL SCIENCE



WILLIAM MEHOJAH

REGIS UNIVERSITY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS



KINZIE PAPPAN

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION



ABBY WILLIAMS

PITTSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING



ADDISYN IVERS

PONCA CITY BEAUTY COLLEGE

COSMETOLOGY



KYLIE JONES

NORTHWESTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE



SHAYLEE SMITH

UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA HEALTH SCIENCES

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN NURSING



TIFFANY CLOUD

NEWMAN UNIVERSITY

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION
ACADEMIC COMMENDATION

Kaw Nation Honors Kimberly Jenkins at Farewell Celebration

Friends and employees gathered at Johnny Ray McCauley Gymnasium to honor Kimberly Jenkins as her term as Kaw Nation Chairman came to an end. The celebration recognized her leadership and eight years of service to the Nation, both as Tribal Council Secretary and as Chairwoman.

Jenkins received gifts and was surprised with a slideshow put together by Ida Williams and Mikayla Spears. A performance by the Tajé Sage Youth Drum Group also helped mark the occasion, bringing together a community that had been an important part of her time in office.

"The farewell celebration meant the world to me, even though Ida Williams and Mikayla Spears made me cry with the slide show!" Jenkins shared. "It just reminded me of how much love and friendship was built throughout my time here."

Reflecting on her service, Jenkins expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work alongside fellow Council members Debbie Lewman and Wes Pappan for eight years and Robert Allen for six years. Her time on Council included the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by navigating American Rescue Plan Act funding and ensuring spending complied with required guidelines.

"I am truly blessed to have been part of the Nation's growth and progress during this time," she said.

For Jenkins, serving the Kaw Nation carried a personal connection that began long before she took office. As a child, she watched her father serve on Tribal Council, never imagining she would one day follow in his footsteps.

"Being elected Tribal Council Secretary and then being elected as Tribal Chairwoman has been one of





the greatest honors of my life," Jenkins said. "I am very proud to have had the opportunity to serve our people and I look forward to seeing what the next Tribal Council will accomplish for the Kaw Nation."

She also extended her appreciation to the employees who work on behalf of Kaw citizens and reflected on the support she received following the death of her husband, Norman.

"When my husband, Norman, passed away, the amount of love and support that I received from my Kaw Nation Family helped me through one of the most difficult times in my life," she shared. "Those gestures meant more than you will ever know, and each of you will always hold a special place in my heart."

The celebration offered an opportunity to recognize not only Jenkins' service, but also the friendships and connections built along the way. In her farewell message, she left citizens and employees with a simple expression of gratitude.

"Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving our Tribe and for being such an important part of my journey. It has truly been an honor to serve the Kaw Nation."

Jessa Mehojah Represents Her Kaáⁿze People in Washington

Current Kaw Nation Princess Jessa Mehojah recently traveled to Washington, D.C., to represent her Kaáⁿze people, an experience she described as humbling, meaningful, and filled with pride.

She thanked Ken Bellmard with the U.S. Department of the Interior for the invitation and her Taposka's, Storm Brave and Susy Smith, for helping her prepare. For Jessa, the trip carried a deeply personal connection. Her great great grandfather and great grandfather traveled to the capital years ago to advocate for the recognition and continuation of the Kaw people. Speaking her language in those buildings connected her visit with their efforts.

Hearing other Native languages and fellow princesses sing and offer a prayer in the Jiwere Nut'achi language also moved her deeply. Their visits happened in different times, but the connection remains: a commitment to the Nation's future, identity, and right to determine its own path.

"Memories of this trip will stay with me and my family for the rest of my life," Jessa shared. "I hope I made you all proud."





KAW NATION

INAUGURAL

LUNCHEON

The Kaw Nation cordially
invites you to

The Inauguration of the
2026 ~ 2030
Kaw Nation Chairman,
Secretary & Tribal Council Seats
1 and 3

Wednesday, November 4, 2026
12:00 p.m.

Carolyn Renfro Event Center
445 Fairview Ave.
Ponca City, Ok 74601

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