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COURTESY

Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. delivers his annual State of the Nation address on Sept. 4 via video as part of this year's virtual Cherokee National Holiday.

ANNUAL ADDRESS

Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. calls for a new hospital in his State of the Nation address during the Cherokee National Holiday.

BY D. SEAN ROWLEY
Senior Reporter

For the second consecutive year, circumstances required Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. to give his annual State of the Nation address by video, with the COVID-19 pandemic again forcing most of the 2021 Cherokee National Holiday onto virtual platforms.

Hoskin opened his 13-minute speech saying the Nation "remains strong" despite the pandemic and other challenges.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has been, without a doubt, the greatest modern

test of the strength of our Nation," he said. "In the face of this crisis the Cherokee people, including our workforce, has shown great resolve. Years of investment meant we had a health system at the ready when we needed it the most. Decades of sound financial management meant that, as COVID ravaged the economy, no employee missed a paycheck."

While the video address touched various topics, perhaps the biggest was a plan to build a medical facility to replace W.W. Hastings Hospital, and begin investment toward a

SEE ADDRESS, 2

CN eyes \$3.4B budget for FY 22

The Cherokee Nation's comprehensive budget for fiscal year 2022 would again set a record if approved.

BY CHAD HUNTER
Reporter

TALHEQUAH – Cherokee Nation lawmakers on Sept. 7 were presented with another record-breaking budget proposal, this time for fiscal year 2022.

The principal chief's \$3.4 billion proposal would earmark \$2.98 billion for operations and \$418.52 million for capital.

"This comprehensive budget is the largest budget ever presented," new Treasurer Janees Taylor said. "Most of our funding is coming from federal agencies. The highest funding is coming from the Department of Treasury due mainly to the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. They constitute 39.3% of federal funding received. (Indian Health Service) not surprisingly, is the next highest with 26.1%."

After more than three hours of discussion, the Tribal Council's Executive & Finance Committee supported the budget proposal 16-1, with a full legislative vote expected on Sept. 13.

"The annual budget is the backbone of the Cherokee Nation and all that we do," Tribal Councilor Keith Austin said. "Without a budget passing, the work of the Cherokee Nation will come to a stop on Oct. 1. So it's important that we do our work and do it well."

The proposal, which allocates funding for the CN's 24 departments, addresses spending for health care, housing, roads, jobs, education and other tribal services.

"I'm so excited to see the amount of money we're devoting to public health and wellness, specifically for fitness for our Cherokees and substance abuse treatment facilities," Tribal Councilor Victoria Vazquez said.

From the federal rescue act, the tribe anticipates an

SEE BUDGET, 2

CN honors citizens, organizations in holiday ceremony

Awards are given to Cherokees, others for statesmanship, patriotism, community leadership and devotion.

BY STAFF REPORTS

TALHEQUAH – The Cherokee Nation on Sept. 2 celebrated citizens and organizations for their statesmanship, patriotism, community leadership and devotion to the tribe during a virtual Cherokee National Holiday Awards Ceremony.

The tribe also honored Apple, Google and Microsoft for helping to preserve the Cherokee language and expand its use globally via technology.

"Each year, the Cherokee Nation pauses to pay recognition to Cherokee citizens, as well as our non-Native friends, who have worked tirelessly to promote and advance the efforts of the Cherokee Nation," said Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. "This year's honorees have gone above and beyond in their service both here on the Cherokee Nation reservation, and around the world. Their efforts will have generational impacts."

The Medal of Patriotism Award is given to those who answered the call of duty, made great sacrifices and risked their lives in service to the CN and the United States, defending and promoting freedom and liberty.

Harley Buzzard, of Eucha, is a Vietnam-era veteran who served from 1967-70. He previously served as director of the CN water and sanitation program and

director of the tribe's community infrastructure program, working to bring road improvements, clean water and better facilities throughout the reservation. He also served 12 years on the Tribal Council. In presenting the award, Hoskin noted that Buzzard was known for asking tough but fair questions, always focused on making the work of the CN the best it could be. Buzzard also served on the National Inter-Tribal Association, the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission Advisory Board and other organizations.

The Statesman Award is given to those who, as public servants, epitomize the servant leader ideal, exemplifying Cherokee values and acting with respect, dignity and graciousness while working for the betterment of the CN and its citizens.

Charlie Soap, of Adair County, formerly served as the CN executive director of community services. He, along with his wife and former principal chief, Wilma Mankiller, worked tirelessly to create and improve water access in communities now serviced by the Cherry Tree Rural Water District, including the historic Bell waterline. That planning and work as a community organizer started in the early 1980s. In 2021, Hoskin signed the Wilma P. Mankiller and Charlie Soap Water Act, injecting needed funding and strategic planning into the tribe's efforts



COURTESY

The Cherokee Nation on Sept. 2 celebrated tribal citizens and organizations for their statesmanship, patriotism, community leadership and devotion to the tribe during a virtual Cherokee National Holiday Awards Ceremony.

at increasing availability of clean water across the tribe's reservation.

The Community Leadership Individual Award is given in recognition of CN citizens who have given their time to make their communities more vibrant, livable places. Their example of servant leadership embodies Cherokee values, and is held in high esteem by their peers for strengthening the bonds of CN citizens.

Jade Day, of Muskogee, advocates for increased awareness for rare diseases in Indian Country and the challenges patients and their families face. She was named by the National Organization

for Rare Disorders and the Oklahoma Rare Action Network as an ambassador for Oklahoma to serve as liaison to state agencies, networks and officials to increase awareness of rare diseases and disorders. In 2020, Hoskin established the tribe's first rare disease committee, naming Day a member.

Chanace Condit, of Modesto, California, serves as a field representative for the California State Assembly. He began his career in public service by assisting constituents. In 2018, Condit was elected

SEE AWARDS, 2

Rules Committee keeps votes public, picks Shambaugh as speaker

Committee members debate whether to vote privately when selecting committee chairs and co-chairs.

BY D. SEAN ROWLEY
Senior Reporter

TALHEQUAH – With a new composition of members, the Cherokee Nation Tribal Council committee meetings got underway on Aug. 26 with the Rules Committee debating to make confidential the votes for officers using ballots rather than a voice vote or show of hands.

Those supporting the secret vote said they were not concerned about flak from constituents, but believed open voting might bruise relations between councilors. The committee did not approve the adjustment and held voice votes.

In the voting for committee chairs, co-chairs and

advisory board positions, only the co-chair for Rules Committee was contested. Joe Deere won the position by an 8-7 vote over Johnny Jack Kidwell. Both nominees abstained from the voice vote.

Mike Shambaugh was the only nominee for Tribal Council speaker, and Victoria Vazquez was chosen as the deputy speaker with no opposition. Dora Patzkowski was the only nominee for Council treasurer.

Shambaugh was also named chairman of the Rules Committee.

Selected committee chairs, co-chairs and advisory board members – all lone nominees – included:

- Executive & Finance: Keith Austin, chairman; Joshua Sam, co-chairman;
- Health: Mike Dobbins, chairman; Patzkowski, co-chairwoman;
- Community Service: Daryl Legg, chairman; Melvina Shotpouch, co-chairwoman;
- Resource: E.O. Smith, chairman;
- Culture: Vazquez, chairwoman; Candessa Tehee,

co-chairwoman;

- Education: Shawn Crittenden, chairman;
- Cherokee Nation Businesses advisory board: Wes Nofire, Patzkowski, Austin, Vazquez, Dobbins, Kidwell, Shotpouch and Shambaugh;
- Gaming Commission advisory board: Nofire, Kidwell and Tehee;
- Housing Authority of Cherokee Nation advisory board: Rex Jordan, Sam, Dobbins, Smith and Tehee; and Inter-Tribal Council advisory board: Austin, Deere, Patzkowski and Danny Callison.

Councilors also unanimously approved the nomination of Janees Taylor as CN treasurer.

Unanimous votes were also given for the re-nomination of Dewayne Marshall to the Sequoyah High School board of education and J. Blake Fletcher and Marilyn Vann to the CN Environmental Protection Commission, as well as Frank Delozier to the Gaming Commission.

Also, the committee entered executive session before emerging to select John Young as the Council's attorney.