

The Choctaw Nation Recognized As an Oklahoma Clean Community

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Contact: Erin Hatfield, (405) 702-7119

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), in partnership with Keep Oklahoma Beautiful (KOB), will recognize the Choctaw Nation as an Oklahoma Clean Community during a special ceremony scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on February 20, 2020. The ceremony will be held at the Choctaw Recycling Center, 3408 Wes Watkins Blvd, Durant, Oklahoma 74701. The Choctaw Nation will be recognized as a Level I, Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, Oklahoma Clean Community. This is the highest recognition a community can receive under the Oklahoma Clean Community Program.

The Choctaw Nation promotes community environmental stewardship by involving volunteers, businesses, civic organizations, and civic leadership in various environmental projects, cleanups, and recycling events.

Choctaw Nation Recycling began with a Going Green Team and small scale recycling in 2009 and gradually expanded into two facilities with 15 employees. Choctaw Recycling has processed over 24 million pounds of recycling material and 267 thousand tires with collections across 10 counties in Oklahoma.

Choctaw Nation Recycling is an affiliate of KOB and has participated in the Great American Cleanup, America Recycles Day, and Fresh Paint Days. In 2019 they collected 71,200 pounds of trash and 175 pounds of electronics. With 1000 volunteers they cleaned up 32 miles of road, six acres of public parks, and one illegal dump site. For their efforts they were a finalist for the Environmental Excellence Awards. Choctaw Nation has held multiple collection events over the past several years for tires and electronics. These events have helped reduce hazardous materials from ending up in landfills and have prevented dumping. As a result of their efforts, the Choctaw Nation has reduced many risks to human health and the environment. The Choctaw Nation is now an Oklahoma Clean Community.

DEQ and KOB recognize entities that participate in at least one tire collection event annually, the Great American Cleanup and other environmental service projects. DEQ encourages entities to coordinate a community-wide cleanup of used tires. DEQ's Tire Recycling Indemnity Fund will pay to haul off old, unused, or abandoned tires. Tire piles can be an eyesore and attract unwelcome pests, such as mosquitoes and rodents. After cleanup is complete and all criteria for other service projects are met, a community can be recognized as an Oklahoma Clean Community.

More information on the Used Tire Recycling Program is available at <https://www.deq.ok.gov/land-protection-division/recycling/tire-recycling/> or by contacting Ferrella March at ferrella.march@deq.ok.gov or 405-702-5175.

Recycling is a good thing. Please recycle any printed emails.