



## **Native American artists to be featured in Chickasaw Country**

*Photos and paintings on display through June*

**OKLAHOMA CITY– (March 1, 2018)** Three American Indian artists, Billy Hensley, Paula Loftin and Daniel Worcester, will have their artwork featured at three separate Chickasaw Country locations in south-central Oklahoma. Starting March 1, 2018 through June 30, 2018, visitors can view Hensley’s paintings at the Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center in Davis, Oklahoma, Loftin’s photography at the Chickasaw Visitor Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma, and Worcester’s photography at the Chickasaw Nation Information Center in Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

“Visitors exploring Chickasaw Country can stop at the tourism centers to get a deeper look into Native American art, history and culture through each artist’s creative filter,” said Paige Williams Shepherd, director of corporate development and tourism for the Chickasaw Nation. “Each tourism center showcases the work of one contemporary Native American artist and offers information on attractions throughout the region.”

### **Billy Hensley, Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center, Davis, Oklahoma**

Hensley brings modern Chickasaw culture to the mainstream art scene by creating paintings that incorporate native Chickasaw culture with unique techniques. His work has earned him a spot in the upcoming Chickasaw traveling exhibition, “Visual Voices,” which begins in June at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art in Norman and will continue to travel around the country.

“I strive to focus on what it meant to be Chickasaw long ago, and what it means to be Chickasaw in today’s world,” says Hensley. “I find inspiration for my work in everyday life and through the nostalgia that being Chickasaw brings.”

Throughout his adult life Billy has practiced and studied art, but he remains a mostly self-taught artist. With the desire to help bring Chickasaw artists into the global art community, Hensley said he continuously works toward developing new skills and improving current techniques.

“I feel the viewer interprets the work through their own life lenses, and that is where the meaning truly lies,” Hensley said.

An artist reception will be held for Hensley from noon to 2 p.m., March 3, at the Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center in Davis, Oklahoma.

### **Paula Loftin, Chickasaw Visitor Center, Sulphur Oklahoma**

Loftin, a Chickasaw citizen and Oklahoma native, carries a lifelong love of photography, horses, cowboys and the Western lifestyle. She combines those interests with a unique artistic talent that captures the heart of western life.

Whether it's cowboys, ranch life, mustangs in the wild or beautiful landscapes and nature, Loftin captures the essence of today's West and brings it alive. Her sharp photography provides a unique, enjoyable look into modern Western culture.

An artist reception will be held for Loftin from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m., March 3, at the Chickasaw Visitor Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma.

#### **Daniel Worcester, Chickasaw Nation Information Center, Tishomingo, Oklahoma**

Worcester is a member of the Chickasaw Nation and has been capturing works of art through a lens since receiving his first camera as a gift in 1966. Worcester then borrowed a Cannon 35mm from a friend, and his love for photography quickly grew. Black and white photography became the mainstay of capturing his subjects on film.

Worcester transitioned to digital photography in 2007 when he began producing his own commercial images. His current compositions include "Native Americans in Pop Culture and Advertising" and images capturing natural Chickasaw surroundings throughout Oklahoma.

Inducted into the Chickasaw Hall of Fame in 2009, Worcester was also named Honored One at the 2013 Red Earth Festival in Oklahoma City and given the 2017 Silver Feather Award by the Chickasaw Nation. He has received many prestigious awards for his continuing work in the art of bladesmithing as well as writing three books of poetry.

An artist reception will be held Worcester from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., March 10, at the Chickasaw Nation Information Center in Tishomingo, Oklahoma.

For more information on the artists' receptions, visit [www.chickasawcountry.com](http://www.chickasawcountry.com).

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#### **Chickasaw Nation Information Center in Tishomingo, Oklahoma**

The Chickasaw Nation Information Center serves as a gateway for the many attractions in this historic section of the Chickasaw Nation, including the Chickasaw Capitol Building and Council House Museum, Chickasaw White House, Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge and Blue River. Located at the intersection of Capitol and Main streets, the 10,700-square-foot Information Center houses the Chickasaw Nation Tourism Department, tribal Office of Special Events, Johnston County Chamber of Commerce and Johnston County Historical Society. To learn more, call 580-387-2762 or visit Chickasaw Country's website at [ChickasawCountry.com](http://ChickasawCountry.com).

#### **Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center in Davis, Oklahoma**

Located adjacent to Bedré Fine Chocolate, the Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center is located at the southwest corner of exit 55 on Interstate 35. Opened in November 2012, the Chickasaw Nation Welcome Center has several amenities including a lounge area, vending machines, an outdoor children's playground and a dog park. Hours of operation are Monday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information about the center call 580-369-4222 or visit Chickasaw Country's website at [ChickasawCountry.com](http://ChickasawCountry.com).

#### **Chickasaw Visitor Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma**

Located across the street from the Artesian Hotel, the Chickasaw Visitor Center is located at the northeast corner of Broadway and State Highway 7 in Sulphur. Opened in November 2013, the Chickasaw Visitor Center includes a lounge area, a gift shop and multi-media video room. Hours of operation are Monday through Sunday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information about the center, call 580-622-8050 or visit Chickasaw Country's website at [ChickasawCountry.com](http://ChickasawCountry.com).

### **About Chickasaw Country**

Nestled in south-central Oklahoma, Chickasaw Country is a regional tourism organization representing 13 of Oklahoma's 77 counties. As the official destination tourism organization, Chickasaw Country includes 7,648 square miles, 11 percent of Oklahoma's total 68,597 square miles. Chickasaw Country, a division of the Chickasaw Nation, is a tourism source for visitors and communities within the region and promotes destinations, attractions and festivals. Chickasaw Country is a diverse and culturally-vested destination, with new adventures and experiences around every corner.

### **About the Chickasaw Nation**

With more than 60,000 citizens, the Chickasaw Nation is the 12th largest federally-recognized Indian tribe in the United States. The Chickasaw Nation has an annual economic impact of more than \$2.4 billion in Oklahoma. The tribe has more than 14,000 employees. A democratic republic with executive, legislative and judicial departments, the tribe's jurisdictional territory includes all or part of 13 counties in south-central Oklahoma.

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