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Bridging the Future

Ground broken on bridge connecting Chickasaw National Recreation Area With Chickasaw Cultural Center

SULPHUR, Okla. -- Along the picturesque banks of Rock Creek in Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby led groundbreaking ceremonies to begin construction of a bridge which will unite the Chickasaw Cultural Center and the Chickasaw National Recreation Area.

Joined Monday, July 27, by several tribal elected officials, CNRA park rangers, and a host of local leaders and community members, Gov. Anoatubby described the project as an emblem of the long-standing partnership among the Chickasaw Nation, CNRA and the city of Sulphur.

“Chickasaw Nation Recreation Area is a testament to the partnership that developed between the Chickasaw Nation and the National Park Service more than a century ago. It is a partnership that I’m proud to say still exists today,” said Gov. Anoatubby. “This bridge is a symbol of that partnership. Ultimately, having this partnership and this connection between Chickasaw National Recreation Area and the Chickasaw Cultural Center is beneficial for all involved.”

Constructed of steel and concrete, the 195-foot suspension pedestrian bridge will span Rock Creek and provide visitors easy access between the two attractions.

Access points will be located at Cat’s Eye Road near Veteran’s Lake in CNRA and near the Traditional Village at the Chickasaw Cultural Center. More recreation options for visitors could help boost the local tourism industry, Gov. Anoatubby said.

“Among other things, we believe this partnership will Sulphur’s visibility as a

tourist destination,” said Gov. Anoatubby. “We hope this easy access will increase the number of people visiting both destinations and raise public awareness of the sites in general. And that means local businesses will be seeing more guests, who are choosing to stay longer periods of time in the area.”

The suspension bridge is designed to exist in harmony with the natural environment.

Construction, which is a joint effort between the Chickasaw Nation and the National Park Service, is expected to be complete in early 2016.

Since opening in 2010, more than 350,000 visitors have experienced the Chickasaw Cultural Center.



Taking part in the historic groundbreaking linking the Chickasaw National Recreation Area with the Chickasaw Cultural Center are, from left, Dan Boren, president of corporate development for the Chickasaw Nation; Tom John, under-secretary of community services; Lisa John, secretary of culture and humanities; tribal legislator Connie Barker; tribal legislator Nancy Elliott; tribal legislator Beth Alexander; tribal legislator Tim Colbert; Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby, Chickasaw National Recreation Area Director Bill Wright; Chickasaw Nation Lt. Governor Jefferson Keel; tribal legislator Katie Case; tribal legislator David Woerz; Chickasaw Supreme Court Justice Cheri Bellefeuille-Gordon; tribal legislator Mary Jo Green; tribal legislator Shana Tate Hammond; tribal legislator Dean McManus; Xavier Neira with Manhattan Construction and Bridge Company; Chickasaw Ambassador at Large to the United States Neal McCaleb, and National Park Service officials Ron Parker and Jack Attig.