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Published February 22, 2007 08:55 am - Sitting Tribal Council member seeks re-election

Cowan seeking re-election to Tribal Council

Tribal Councilwoman Cara Cowan Watts seeks re-election in the upcoming Cherokee Nation General Election June 23.



Cowan Watts is running on what she terms "her successes" such as rebuilding community, strengthening education throughout the tribe and the addition of hundreds of new jobs with health and other benefits for Cherokees in Rogers County.

"My years on the job as the Tribal Council representative for Rogers County Cherokees have been an honor and privilege," Cowan Watts said. "I get up everyday and work hard to help Cherokees realize their dreams of well-paying jobs, affordable housing, healthcare and educational opportunities. Fellow Cherokees are dedicated to family and work hard to make a living. My proudest moments have been with other Rogers County Cherokees practicing 'Ga Du Gi' by working together to help the community redo the roof for a local church or build a community building."

Since Cowan Watts took office in 2003, Rogers County Cherokees have held more than 45 regular community meetings, began regular public cultural days, established a non-profit organization and establish an eight-acre cultural ground for stickball and gatherings.

Cowan Watts has represented the Cherokee Nation on the Claremore Indian Hospital Advisory Board and serves as vice chair. National Indian health commitments include an appointment to the newly formed American Indian Alaska Native Health Research Advisory Committee and is the elected co-chair representing Cherokee interests in establishing research priorities for Native health care.

"I am proud of our accomplishments as a Nation but we can not stand idle," Cowan Watts said. "There is much work to be done to ensure every Cherokee has the opportunity to pursue a career path which guarantees their family economic self-reliance with jobs in the Cherokee Nation."

After completing her term as the secretary of the national organization, American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES), Board of Directors, Cowan Watts has been working with schools and students across the tribe to strengthen math and science skills by creating K-12 AISES chapters. For more than eight years, she has operated an e-mail list dedicated to providing scholarship, internship and job opportunities to students and professionals.

Locally, Cowan Watts is a member of the Claremore Rotary Club and continues to serve the Cherokee Indian Women's Pocahontas Club as Public Relations chair for several years. In addition to monthly meetings highlighting tribal services and programs, Cowan Watts maintains a community outreach program using e-mail and the World Wide Web providing daily news and events important to Rogers County Cherokees.

While serving on Cherokee Nation Enterprises' Board of Directors as a non-voting member, Cowan Watts has pushed for the Jobs Growth Act which mandates significant gaming dollars be spent on job creation as well as voted to increase the minimum wage.

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With 100 percent attendance at full Tribal Council meetings and active participation in all eight standing committees, Cowan Watts believes she has proven her work ethic. Her Oklahoma State University engineering degrees also provide a distinct background for her to serve the Cherokees living in her home district.

Cowan Watts has a bachelor of science in mechanical engineering, a masters in telecommunications management and pursuing a doctorate in biosystems engineering focused on addressing numerical water quality standards for the Cherokee Nation and other Oklahoma tribes.

Principal Chief Chad Smith supports Watts re-election bid. "Cara has worked tirelessly for the Cherokee people and shows the leadership we need to continue taking the Cherokee Nation forward," Smith said.

"I want to continue helping Chief Smith with the remarkable foundation he has built for the tribe the past eight years," Cowan Watts said. "We are headed in the right direction. I want to continue down this path in building a stronger Rogers County." As a 6th generation Rogers County resident, Cowan Watts is committed to building a better Rogers County for all residents.

Cowan Watts and her crew of local Cherokees kick off her re-Election campaign on Saturday, March 3, 1 p.m. to 3 p.m., at the Rogers County Fair Board Building on the Claremore Expo grounds. The 4th (Almost) Annual Cowan Hog Fry will be June 16.



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