

CHEROKEE NATION REDEVELOPS MARKOMA SCHOOL SITE

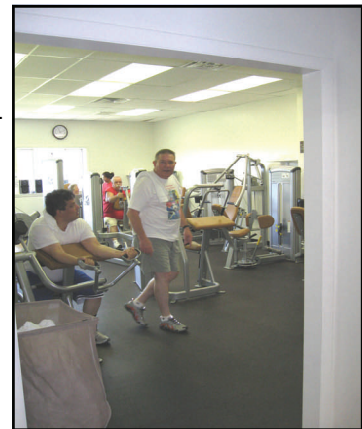


Through the US EPA's Brownfields 128(a) Tribal Response Grant Program, the Inter-Tribal Environmental Council (ITEC) and Cherokee Nation completed environmental site assessments on the Markoma Bible Academy campus, a 19-acre property. After completing site assessment and remediation of lead-based paint, asbestos and other contaminants under the ITEC Tribal Response Grant Program, ITEC and



Cherokee Nation redeveloped buildings on campus into offices for health administration, and a state-of-the-art recreation center – so far with more to come.

The Cherokee Nation established its Capitol in 1836 in Tahlequah, Oklahoma and in 1851 built the Cherokee National Male Seminary educational institution on a hill in the southwestern part of town. Unfortunately the building burned down in 1910 and the property was used as farmland until the Markoma Bible Academy turned the site into a Christian high school campus in 1961. The school closed in 2005 and the Cherokee Nation once again acquired the 19-acre site and an additional purchase of nearly 100-acres around the area. Through community discussions that followed, Cherokee Nation selected Tribal medical, health, elder care and fitness needs as



the best use for the facilities. The dormitories are being converted into offices and the gymnasium building has been made into a 25,000 square-foot state-of-the-art recreation center with a basketball court, weight and fitness exercise spaces and a jogging track. There is also a children's room with activities for little ones while the adults workout. Health information and physical activity classes are offered on a regular basis as well as sports leagues for adults and youth. Membership is free for Tribal members and available to others for a nominal fee. Response to the facility has been much greater than anticipated with almost six-thousand members participating.



On another part of the property the Nation has created a Cherokee Elder Care PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) center. It houses facilities for medical and ancillary services and accommodations for elder day care. Transportation is also provided. The Cherokee Elder Care is the first PACE program in Oklahoma and one of the first rural PACE sites in the Nation.

This project is an excellent example of the EPA's State and Tribal Response Program being used to provide money and technical assistance to address the cleanup and reuse of contaminated property in Indian country.

For more information about ITEC's 128(a) Tribal Response Program, contact Bob Short at bob-short@cherokee.org or EPA Region 6's Brownfields Team at 214-665-2241.

