

Choctaw Housing receives \$8.6 million of stimulus money

The Choctaw Housing Authority has received notification they will receive \$8.6 million of stimulus money to build an additional 72 Independent Living Homes for senior citizens in five sites across southeastern Oklahoma. A large portion of that amount, \$4.6 million, was awarded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act formula, and the other \$4 million was awarded competitively. Only 61 of the 436 tribes who applied received any of those competitive grant funds.

Deputy Director of the Choctaw Housing Authority Duane Winship said the success of receiving the funding from the stimulus package was largely due to the foresight of Chief Gregory E. Pyle and the Tribal Council.

“Twelve years ago, we were instructed to purchase sites large enough to put an initial 10 units per site and have plenty of room to expand in the future,” said Winship. “We have been getting those sites ready so that homes can be built as funds become available.”

Part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was intended to infuse jobs and revenue back into the economy as quickly as possible, so requests that were “shovel ready” were more likely to be considered. Since the Choctaw Nation had a master plan and infrastructure in place for the Independent Living Homes, it was a perfect match for the Recovery Act allocations.

“We are very appreciative of this opportunity to help our elderly with their housing needs,” said Chief Gregory E. Pyle. The \$8.6 million will build 72 new units on five sites: at least 19 of which will be in Poteau, at least 15 in Hugo, at least 15 in Durant, 12 in Talihina and nine in Idabel. Talihina is also going to get a community building and above-ground storm shelter.

“The Choctaw Housing Authority is ready to begin building,” said Winship.