SPECIAL RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION

Commemorating Native American Heritage Month and Honoring Chief Jason "Jake" Rivers of the Choctaw-Apache Tribe of Ebarb

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission proudly recognizes November 2026 as Native American Heritage Month, a time to honor the rich histories, diverse cultures, enduring traditions, and extraordinary contributions of Indigenous peoples to our nation, our state, and our local communities; and

WHEREAS, long before the establishment of the United States, the State of Louisiana, or the Parish of Caddo, Native American peoples inhabited and cared for the lands and waterways of this region, developing sophisticated societies distinguished by agricultural knowledge, craftsmanship, commerce, spiritual traditions, and enduring connections to the natural world; and

WHEREAS, the very name of Caddo Parish honors the Caddo people, whose ancestral homelands extended across portions of present-day Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma, and whose communities, including the Kadohadacho of the upper Red River region, played a defining role in the early history and cultural identity of Northwest Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the Indigenous heritage of Northwest Louisiana also includes the Adai people and the Choctaw-Apache Tribe of Ebarb, whose distinct histories, ancestral connections, and continuing cultural traditions reflect the remarkable diversity and resilience of Native American communities throughout our region; and

WHEREAS, the Choctaw-Apache Tribe of Ebarb, whose community is centered in western Sabine Parish near Zwolle, traces its heritage to generations of Indigenous families, including Choctaw, Apache, Adai, and other peoples whose histories became intertwined along the colonial frontier of Louisiana and Texas, creating a distinctive cultural identity that has endured for centuries; and

WHEREAS, officially recognized by the State of Louisiana in 1978, the Choctaw-Apache Tribe of Ebarb continues to preserve and celebrate its unique cultural heritage through the traditions, knowledge, family relationships, community gatherings, and educational activities passed from one generation to the next; and

WHEREAS, throughout North Louisiana, ancient archaeological sites, historic settlements, and cultural landmarks bear witness to the ingenuity and accomplishments of Indigenous peoples, including the ancestral Caddo communities of the Red River Valley, the historic Native American presence surrounding Caddo Lake, and the monumental earthworks of Poverty Point in northeastern Louisiana, which stand among the most extraordinary achievements of ancient North American societies; and

WHEREAS, the history of Native American peoples also includes profound hardships resulting from colonization, displacement, the loss of ancestral lands, and efforts to suppress Indigenous cultures and traditions, yet Native communities have demonstrated extraordinary perseverance in maintaining their identities, strengthening their institutions, and ensuring that their heritage remains a living and vital part of our society; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission recognizes that Native American history is not simply a record of the distant past, but an ongoing story reflected in the lives, leadership, accomplishments, and cultural contributions of Indigenous peoples who continue to enrich the communities of Louisiana and the United States; and

WHEREAS, in this spirit, the Commission is especially pleased to recognize **Chief Jason "Jake" Rivers**, who was elected in 2026 to lead the Choctaw-Apache Tribe of Ebarb, accepting the important responsibilities of tribal leadership, community representation, cultural preservation, and service to the members of his Tribe; and

WHEREAS, prior to his election as Chief, Mr. Rivers demonstrated his commitment to the preservation and celebration of Native American heritage through his involvement with tribal cultural activities and youth programs, including his support of the Rising Sun Youth Group, which helps introduce younger generations to traditional Choctaw-Apache dance, ceremonial customs, and the importance of maintaining a meaningful connection to their ancestral identity; and

WHEREAS, his dedication to engaging young people in the traditions of their ancestors reflects an understanding that the continued vitality of Indigenous communities depends upon the preservation of cultural knowledge, the strengthening of relationships between generations, and the encouragement of young people to embrace their heritage with pride and confidence; and

WHEREAS, as Chief of the Choctaw-Apache Tribe of Ebarb, Mr. Rivers assumes a position of significant responsibility and opportunity, helping guide the Tribe's efforts to preserve its cultural identity, support the well-being of its members, strengthen community institutions, and create opportunities for future generations; and

WHEREAS, the Caddo Parish Commission recognizes that effective tribal leadership requires a deep appreciation for the past, a sincere commitment to the needs of the present, and a thoughtful vision for the future, and commends Chief Rivers for his willingness to undertake these responsibilities in service to his community; and

WHEREAS, Native American Heritage Month provides a meaningful opportunity for the citizens of Caddo Parish to learn more about the Indigenous peoples of Northwest Louisiana, to appreciate their distinct histories and cultural contributions, and to recognize the importance of respecting the identities, traditions, and leadership of contemporary Native American communities; and

WHEREAS, the Commission further recognizes the importance of preserving historic and archaeological resources, encouraging accurate and respectful education, and supporting opportunities for Native American peoples to share their own histories, experiences, and cultural traditions with the broader community; and

WHEREAS, in commemorating Native American Heritage Month and celebrating the election of Chief Jason "Jake" Rivers, the Caddo Parish Commission affirms its respect for the Indigenous peoples whose histories are inseparable from the story of Northwest Louisiana, and its appreciation for those who continue the important work of preserving their heritage and strengthening their communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Caddo Parish Commission, in regular session convened, does hereby proudly recognize and commemorate **NOVEMBER 2026 AS NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH IN CADDO PARISH**, honoring the rich histories, diverse cultures, enduring traditions, and invaluable contributions of Native American peoples to our Parish, our state, and our nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission extends its sincere congratulations and special recognition to **CHIEF JASON "JAKE" RIVERS** upon his election as Chief of the Choctaw-Apache Tribe of Ebarb, commending his commitment to cultural preservation, youth engagement, and community service, and expressing its best wishes for wisdom, success, and fulfillment as he undertakes the responsibilities of tribal leadership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission expresses its respect and appreciation for the Caddo Nation, the Adai people, the Choctaw-Apache Tribe of Ebarb, and the many other Indigenous peoples whose histories and continuing contributions have enriched the cultural heritage of Northwest Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Commission encourages all citizens, educational institutions, community organizations, and public agencies to observe Native American Heritage Month through learning, reflection, cultural appreciation, and meaningful efforts to preserve and share the histories and traditions of the Indigenous peoples who have shaped our region.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this Special Resolution be presented to **Chief Jason "Jake" Rivers** as an expression of the congratulations, admiration, and respect of the Caddo Parish Commission and the citizens of Caddo Parish, and as a lasting affirmation of the Commission's appreciation for the enduring heritage, cultural contributions, and continued vitality of Native American communities throughout Northwest Louisiana.

ADOPTED by the Caddo Parish Commission on this _____ day of _____, 2026.