

## Sales Tax

# Business is good in Harrah

By Ryan Horton  
choctawtimes@yahoo.com

Harrah's tax collections are higher than expected, and more businesses are looking to setup shop in the community.

In recent years Harrah's tax collections have repeatedly bested projected numbers.

Tax revenue is important, because in Oklahoma that's how cities fund services for residents and infrastructure expansion and repairs.

Collections of sales tax for the City of Harrah continue to reflect the recent influx of new businesses with collections being higher than expected. Each month's receipts easily exceed the city's budgeted amount of \$266,666.

The city brought in nearly \$293,000 last month. Before that, \$288,588 and \$273,150 were reported monthly collections.

To date, collections total just over \$2 million, which is nine percent or \$173,413 in excess of the budgeted amount.

The fiscal year resets July 1.

A major component of that economic success is the booming Sweeney's Switch district of downtown Harrah.

Among major attractions are the Lumber Shack and Black Raven Irish Pub.

Harrah received an Association of Central Oklahoma Governments grant to develop a masterplan for a new downtown district, Sweeney's Switch.

The grant provided the city with \$50,000 used to create a masterplan for a downtown destination that will attract visitors and their tax dollars to

east Oklahoma County.

Locally owned and operated dining options such as the Black Raven Irish Pub and The Lumber Shack combined with live entertainment and event such as Saturdays on Main have served as a catalyst for the new district. Additional entertainment and dining options are expected to make the district a major attraction in eastern Oklahoma County.

The widely-renowned Chicken Shack originated in a small gas station near Luther and reinvented itself many times before looking to expand into Harrah and Arcadia.

Much of the charm of the early-day lumber yard has been preserved and converted into large seating areas with the longest bar in Oklahoma running right down the middle of the structure.

Outdoor fire pits are easily accessible and S'Mores Kits can be purchased for use. Ed Gochenour and his crew have quickly converted the Lumber Shack from five days week to seven with buffet on Saturday and Smorgasbord on Sunday.

Long range plans call for adding a second floor to be used for dances, shows and concerts.

Harrah was one of three Oklahoma cities awarded a grant from ACOG. El Reno and Guthrie were also announced as ACOG grant winning cities.

Improvements for the district could include expanding sidewalks, making parking at an angle instead of parallel and adding walking trails.

Downtown isn't the only section of Harrah seeing much interest.

There are new commercial developments located along Harrah Road and NE 23rd Street.



**In November of 2021 a hotel opened in Harrah. Comfort Inn and Suites is located along Harrah Road just south of Reno. PHOTO BY RYAN HORTON**

## FARMERS MARKET

As weather warms up, Harrah's beloved farmer's market is set to return.

The Harrah Farmers Market will be open in the Harrah Heritage Park on the first and third Saturday of each month, May through September.

Local growers and vendors will setup shop for visitors from 9 a.m. until noon.

For event information and activity applications contact coordinators through their website, HarrahFOP.com.

## MAIN STREET GARDEN

The Harrah Main Street Community Garden will also be opening soon.

The Main Street Garden opens March 25.

Market in the Park and Pigs in the Park have been slated for October 7.

Christmas in the Park and the annual Harrah Christmas Parade has been slated for Dec. 2.

## CONCESSIONS IN THE PARK

Fiesta Taco has withdrawn from the concession area of Harrah Heritage Park.

Since Fiesta Taco has withdrawn from the concession area in Harrah Heritage Park, the Harrah City Council is considering to re-advertise and reaching out to those who applied originally.

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Harrah Chamber of Commerce is a member driven organization whose mission is to preserve, protect and promote local business and educational opportunities within the community.

For the last decade, the nonprofit business organization has helped develop a successful business environment under executive director Brandy McKay.

"The Chamber provides its members with a multitude of ways to increase visibility in the community. Like most membership organizations, the more you put into it, the more you get out of it," McKay said.

The Harrah Chamber of Commerce has a number of committees and events, which provide one with a way to become active in the community, some of the events include the annual auction, the Harrah Day festival, Legislative luncheon, Business After Hours, clay shooting tournament and much more.

The group hosts regular ribbon-cutting and ground-breaking ceremonies, awards scholarships to local students and more. For more information on the Harrah Chamber of Commerce call 454-2190 or visit [harrahchamber.com](http://harrahchamber.com).