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WASHINGTON, D.C. — Deborah Powell is on a trip of a lifetime. The Choctaw Nation Housing Authority employee is in Washington, D.C., and is set to be seated next to Michelle Obama tonight as the president of the United States gives his first State of the Union address of the year.

"We are very excited for Debbie and honored that one of our employees has been invited to attend such a prestigious event," said Chief Gregory E. Pyle.

The invitation was extended to Powell because she is an example of how federal stimulus funds have retained and provided jobs in rural America. The Housing Authority has received two awards totaling more than \$8 million through the Native American Housing block grants program. The grants are targeted primarily toward building additional independent living homes for senior citizens in five sites across Southeastern Oklahoma – approximately 19 in Poteau, 15 in Hugo, 15 in Durant, 12 in Talihina and nine in Idabel. The construction plans were a perfect fit for Recovery Act allocations.

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