

We all appreciate the Cherokee heritage in Clay County and western North Carolina. Live demonstrations and presentations based on the heritage of our Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians at the annual Cherokee Heritage Festival will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 17.

The Cherokee Homestead Exhibit is a replica of a 17th century homestead complete with winter house, summer house, corn crib, multi-use shelter and mound gardens. The address is 805 Highway 64 Business in Hayesville.

A golf cart shuttle will provide free service from several parking areas and downtown to the exhibit and museum. This free event is sponsored by Clay County Communities Revitalization Association.

Activities include:

- Traditional dancing by Eastern Band of Cherokee Indian performers.

- Stories about Cherokee culture and demonstrations of flint knapping and woodcarving by widely recognized artist and member of EBCI, Davy Arch.

- Demonstrations of arts and crafts including finger weaving, bead work, basket weaving, dart making, blowgun skills, wood carving, flint knapping, etc. by Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

- Flute music by Dan Hollifield, Hayesville resident and member of the Cherokee Nation who makes the flutes he plays.

- Presentation by Darry Wood, creator of Basket Weaver Exhibit in Hayesville's Old Jail Museum, will debut a Young Cherokee Hunter exhibit at this year's festival before it goes to permanent display in the Cherokee Cultural Exhibit in Moss Memorial Library. Instructor of outdoor skills including making fire with friction and thistle down and blowguns.

- Cherokee-related activities for children of all ages.

- Cherokee Trails map and discussion by Lamar Marshall, research director and historical graphics designer for Southeast Heritage, researching and mapping Cherokee trails, ecology and geography in conjunction with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and North Carolina Trail of Tears Association, re-creating cultural landscapes by integrating archives, early surveys and historical maps.

- Food by Reed Frybread - frybread with a variety of toppings, hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages.

- Native plant walks and talks by MountainTrue.

Other items of interest along the Quanassee Path include a Cherokee History Trail which includes the exhibit, museum, Cherokee Cultural Center at Moss Memorial Library; Spikebuck Mound/Quanassee Town site and the Cherokee Botanical Sanctuary and adjacent Clay County Old Jail Museum with Cherokee artifacts, local history displays and art. There is no entrance fee. The annual Pet Celebration is on the courthouse square the same day and time, Clay County Historical & Arts Council will be hosting a silent auction at the Jail Museum beginning at 11 a.m. and Gnarly Fingers will be performing on the courthouse square that evening.

Performers and artists for this year's Cherokee Festival were funded in part by the Clay County Historical & Arts Council with support from the North Carolina Arts Council, a division of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

For festival information, call Rob Tiger or Curt Wheeler (828) 371-0462 phone or text, email: chfhayesville@gmail.com or visit: www.cccra-nc.org/ for details. The museum and exhibit are located just off the downtown square.