

Cherokee Heritage Festival has dancers, artisans and music

The rich and proud heritage of our Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), which reportedly dates back more than 11,000 years, will be brought to life from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 15, with live demonstrations and presentations at the Cherokee Heritage Festival in Hayesville, NC.

Located next to the Clay County Historical Arts Museum, 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, and will be the site of the festival. Visitors to previous festivals have commented, “The exhibit is the perfect place to see the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians sharing their culture.”

This year’s free event will feature:

- Dancing by Cherokee North Carolina’s Oconaluftee Living History Village performers.
- Stories about Cherokee culture, and demonstrations of flint knapping and woodcarving by widely recognized artist and member of EBCI, Davy Arch.
- Hoop dancing by world champion dancer Eddie Swimmer.
- Pottery demonstrations by North Carolina Heritage Award winning Cherokee beloved woman Amanda Swimmer.
- Information about Cherokee history and culture by retired Tri-County Community College Indian History and Culture instructor, Billy Ray Parker.
- 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.
- Cherokee-related activities for children of all ages.
- Food by Reed Frybread: frybread with a variety of toppings, hamburgers, hot dogs and beverages.
- Authentic Cherokee art for your perusal and purchase.
- Native plant “walks and talks” by Hiwassee River Watershed Coalition’s Tony Ward and members of Clay County Historical & Arts Council.

In addition to the festival, the adjacent Clay County Old Jail Museum will be open for the day, and features Cherokee artifacts, local history displays and art. There is no entrance fee. There will be a silent auction for work of regional artists.

Visitors to the festival are encouraged to visit other attractions along the 2-mile Quanassee Path: 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.

Call 389-3045 or visit the website: ccra-nc.org for details. The museum and exhibit are located just off the downtown square.

The address is 805 Highway 64 Business in Hayesville. A shuttle will provide festival attendees free service from several parking areas to the exhibit and museum. This free event is sponsored by the Clay County Communities Revitalization Association, a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization.

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