Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. on June 24 said the 68th annual Cherokee National Holiday would be “virtual” in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The annual event is a colossal attraction for the Cherokee Nation and Tahlequah, drawing more than 100,000 visitors annually during Labor Day weekend. However, with record COVID-19 spikes earlier in the summer nationally and in Oklahoma, the CN will hold a downsized holiday with many events available only online.

Officials said traditional game demonstrations, the Cherokee art show and the State of the Nation address will be viewable online. The parade, powwow, softball tournament, fishing derby, food, arts and crafts, and vendor markets have been cancelled.

Hoskin said it was essential to the health of CN citizens and the general public that a virtual holiday occur. He cited the rising incidence of COVID-19 and the expectation of many epidemiologists of a second surge of cases this fall, meaning “a decision on the holiday had to be made now.”

“It’s important we celebrate the great achievements of the Cherokee Nation, our government and our citizens, but COVID-19 still remains a threat, especially for our elders and our community, with the thousands potentially coming into the Cherokee Nation Labor Day weekend,” Hoskin said. “This was a tough decision, but we always want to err on the side of caution and protect our employees who put on the events and the public, so this year we felt it best to share our Cherokee National Holiday celebration and traditions safely online for viewers around the globe to tune in and see.”

Hoskin said the virtual holiday was a decision based on the safety recommendations of health officials within the tribe and across all levels of government.

“I know that many of our arts and crafts vendors, food vendors, artists, dancers, parade entries — all of those who come to visit us each year — may be disappointed,” he said. “But taking this step is the right thing to do. We simply cannot take the risks associated with taking in 100,000 visitors from all over the country into the Cherokee Nation all at once.”

The theme for the 68th holiday is “We the People of the Cherokee Nation: Celebrating Tribal Sovereignty.” The event commemorates the signing of the CN Constitution in 1839, which reestablished the tribe’s government in Indian Territory after the Cherokees’ forced removal from their traditional lands in the southeastern United States.

“This Cherokee National Holiday will be unlike any we’ve ever had, and while some events won’t be open to the public so that we can maintain safety here in the Cherokee Nation, it does allow citizens across the globe to watch an array of events that are traditional to our Cherokee people, and plan their trip to Tahlequah in 2021,” said Austin Patton, holiday coordinator.

A full schedule of virtual events is at holiday.cherokee.org. For more holiday information, call Patton at 918-822-2427.

BY D. SEAN ROWLEY
Senior Reporter
The Cherokee Celebration Continues

We’ve been busy ensuring your next visit to Cherokee Nation is safe and enjoyable. When you’re ready, join us on your next road trip, weekend stay or family vacation.

Plan your visit at VisitCherokeeNation.com

Cherokee National Holiday

Purchase the 2020 Cherokee National Holiday T-shirt online today.

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VIRTUAL HOLIDAY

Many of the holiday events will be offered online. Cherokee National Holiday coordinator Austin Patton said the “on-demand” aspect of this year’s holiday is similar to streaming service, but one, he added, “with a twist.”

“After an event has been viewed, you’ll be able to re-watch it,” he said. “I will debut at a certain date and time, so if you can’t make that date and time you’ll be able to watch it again at a later time. They’ll be available to you online during the month of September.”

One of the 2020 events that can be attended in person is a new offering — movie drive-ins at One Field. The field is located next to the Tribal Complex.

“The drive-in is going to be held and presented by the Cherokee Nation Film Office. Patton said. "They put together a great lineup for all three of these events, from Sept. 3-5. It will start at dusk every night, which is going to be around 8 p.m. We will have register to have a maximum of 300 cars per drive-in.”

Sound for the film will be made available via a specific radio station. Patton said. "The films will include a color commentary and drinks "because we are promoting social distancing," Patton said. “I think that’s going to be a very unique event. Something you’re going to want to tune in and see.”

He added that he hopes “it’s going to become a staple, and maybe something we can carry forward. We’d love to have multiple event more like this, in the future.”

CHEROKEE PHOENIX

HOLIDAY GUIDE

Chicago Holidays

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The Cherokee Phoenix has selected the individuals for its second annual Seven Feathers Awards, which honor those who go above and beyond to make significant impacts in the areas of the Cherokee language, culture, community, service, education, health and business.

For language, the Cherokee Phoenix chose Cherokee Nation citizen and employee David Crawler, of Marble City. Crawler has worked at translating the Cherokee language for 35 years, increasing the availability of the Cherokee language across various platforms. From printed materials and technological advancements, Crawler’s work has resulted in the Cherokee language being at the fingertips of hundreds of thousands of Cherokees.

For culture, the Cherokee Phoenix picked Julie Briscoe Thornton, a CN citizen residing in Checotah. She is a former Junior Miss Cherokee (2012-13), Miss Cherokee (2013-14), Miss Oklahoma Indian Summer (2014-15) and a winner of the 7th Generation Conference Youth Advocate Award (2016). Since then she has spent her time preserving Cherokee culture with her art via pre-contact regalia, pucker toe moccasins and textiles.

For community, the Cherokee Phoenix selected Ellie Johnson, a CN citizen from Stilwell, for starting Ellie’s Hope Factory as a way to help people stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. She wrote letters to friends, family, teachers and others while connected during the COVID-19 pandemic. She wrote letters to hopefully bring some happiness during a gloomy time.

For service, the Cherokee Phoenix chose Elizabeth Brave, a CN citizen from Oklahoma City, who has since 2005 advocated for people with disabilities through helping others understand federal, state and local laws regarding the handicapped. She seeks to educate the public on community service and helps others learn servant leadership. Brave has served as Oklahoma’s ambassador for the Foundation of Sarcoidosis and on the State Independent Living Council as well as the Oklahoma Rehabilitation Commission.

For education, Joyce Rock, a Cherokee Nation citizen from Muskogee, was selected for her long history of teaching. After graduating from college in 1983, she taught math at Hilldale in Muskogee for 15 years. She later got a master’s degree in bilingual education and school administration before directing a Cherokee language and culture program at Gore. She also helped teachers understand how students learn differently, especially Native students, and taught on the Navajo reservation in New Mexico, where she was named the state’s principal of the year in 2013. After moving back to Oklahoma, she has worked for the Oklahoma Department of Education to help improve low-performing schools.

For health, Joshua Holgood, a CN citizen from Fredericksburg, Virginia, was chosen for his service with military veterans. A U.S. Marine Corps veteran, Holgood started the nonprofit charity Black Dog Hunting to help connect with and help veterans via the outdoors while providing an environment for peer-based monitoring and counseling. His organization has provided outdoor healing events to hundreds of military veterans from across the country with the intent to improve their mental health.

And for business, the Cherokee Phoenix selected Tyler Fourkiller, a CN citizen from Stilwell, who owns Fourkiller Lawn Solutions. But behind the scenes, many do not see how he gives back to his community. He has cared for residential lawns and cut trees at no charge for numerous community residents and those in the surrounding area. He has also made donations to entities such as Little League teams and school auctions. Tyler enjoys giving back to those who have helped him attain success without making it known to others.

The awards ceremony is tentatively scheduled for Dec. 12 at the Cherokee Casino Tahlequah’s Chota Conference Center. The awards themselves are red metallic feathers designed by Cherokee artist Tommy Roe Mitchell of Cherokee Metal Art in Yukon. The feathers are approximately a foot long and 3 inches wide. Each feather will be mounted on a cedar plank with a plaque displaying the recipient’s name and award category.

A silent auction is scheduled for the ceremony. All proceeds will go to the Cherokee Phoenix’s Elder Veteran Subscription Fund, which provides free annual subscriptions to CN citizens who are 65 or older, as well as veterans and active military personnel. For information about bidding or sponsoring the event, call Samantha Cochran at 918-453-5743 or email samantha-cochran@cherokee.org.

For information about the auction or to donate, call Terris Howard at 918-453-5743 or email terris-howard@cherokee.org.

BY STAFF REPORTS
T
he ancient game of chunkey has been revived in Cherokee communities in recent years as a means to show another aspect of tribal culture that is not well known.

It was played as far back as 600 CE and was thought to have started in the Cahokia region. Southeastern tribes played chunkey for gambling.

Those who played risked their well-being and some of their lives, said Cole Hogner, Cherokee Nation Native Games chunkey coordinator.

"Traditionally, it was taken very seriously," he said. "They would roll the stone and they would throw their spears and their spears would land and slide," he said.

"They would play up to 12 points. They use two lots and whatever possessions they had to play the game and the loser would have to throw over his possessions.

Thompson said people are still studying how chunkey was played because of its variations. "I'm trying to get the concept of how it's played. Back then when they played, it was on a hard surface. It was almost cement-like. They packed the ground may be 20 yards, 30 yards, and 60 yards long.

Point systems, court styles, spear styles and chunkey stones all varied when played in ancient times. Each community or tribe had its own version. But chunkey players play as close to its original form as possible with some alternatives.

Today, chunkey is played on a flat gravel area. The stone is rolled and two players throw spears. Whoever's spear sticks in the ground lands closest to the stone after it stops rolling receives a point.

Games end when a player gets 31 points. Rather than gambling, Cherokees of all ages now play for friendly competition.

"The game can get long, and it gets pretty competitive," Hogner said. "I know people who will throw it at home. They practice throwing their spears and they make their own spears. It's still held by a lot of tribes, except it's not just plains. It was intended for originally. The origin of it was intended to bring everybody in the region back, Cahokians, farmers, immigrants, visitors, all together. Just like stickball, just like anything else, there's a lot of camaraderie and it's kind of a brotherhood so to speak."

BY LINDSEY BARK

Cherokee Nation citizen and chunkey enthusiast Marcus Thompson demonstrates how to throw a spear in a chunkey dance during the 2019 Cherokee Nation Holiday.

Sparks fly as they perform the dance and show how to throw and roll a chunkey stone.

"It's a gentleman's dance," said dancer Daniel Martinez, an Apache Tribe citizen and U.S. Marine Corps veteran from San Carlos, Arizona. "It's how we honor the elders and other veterans, as well. It's really sacred and about 2 inches thick. Some stones had holes in the middle of them for version in which spears were thrown through the openings.

United Keetoowah Band citizen Matt Girty has been studying and making chunkey stones since 2005. "I'm just taking it from an artist's standpoint. I don't know how they did it back in the day. I've been trying to look at it from as close as I can get to what I've been reading.

Today's chunkey, he makes stones from granite, slate, and sandstone and size at medium-size and thicker so they roll better.

Though there are variations, historically, after the gambling occurred, a chunkey stone was rolled down a flat clay, packed court with a thin layer of sand. Spears were thrown or tossed, and whichever spear slid and stopped nearest the stone when it stopped rolling received a point. CN citizen and chunkey enthusiast Marcus Thompson said.

"They would roll the stone and they would throw their spears and their spears would land and slide," he said.

"They would play up to 12 points. They use two lots and whatever possessions they had to play the game and the loser would have to throw over his possessions.

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2020 Cherokee Nation Holiday Virtual Schedule

**Sept. 1**
- Virtual 5K Run *
- Cherokee National History Museum Tour *
- Art Show: The People's Choice Award Voting *
- Community Tour with Principal Chief Episode 1: Corndoll
- Traditional Games Episode 1: Blowgun
- Art Show: The People's Choice Award Voting *
- Dilligew Tour: Cherokee Heritage Center *
- Traditional Games Episode 2: Chunky
- Traditional Cooking Show: Hog Fry
- Culinary Epics

**Sept. 2**
- Quilt Show: The People's Choice Award Voting *
- Art Show: The People's Choice Award Voting *
- Community Tour with Principal Chief Episode 1: Craig Co./Vinita
- Traditional Games Episode 2: Cornstarch Shoot
- Cherokee Language noon
- Drive-in w/Cherokee Office at

**Sept. 3**
- Fishing (for kids) with Jason Christie 9 a.m.
- Traditional Games Episode 2: Marshalls 10 a.m.
- Traditional Games Episode 2: Hatcher Throwing
- Cherokee Nation Census Live 2020 Census Q&A 2 p.m.
- Drive-in w/Cherokee Office at

**Sept. 4**
- Quilt Show: The People's Choice Award Voting *
- State of the Nation: Tribal Councillor Joe Byrd 11:30 a.m.
- State of the Nation: Deputy Chief Bryan 11:45 p.m.
- Patriotism Awards 4 p.m.
- Leadership Awards 4 p.m.
- 2020 Cherokee National Treasures 6 p.m.

**Sept. 5**
- Art Show: The People's Choice Award Voting *
- Virtual Powwow Winners Announced *
- State of the Nation: Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. noon
- Statesman Awards 3 p.m.
- Worcester Awards 5 p.m.
- Conclusion Message: Deputy Chief Bryan 8 p.m.

**Sept. 6**
- Quilt Show: The People's Choice Announcement noon
- Art Show: The People's Choice Announcement noon
- Art Show: The People's Choice Announcement noon
- Cherokee Drive-in Show at Cherokee Plaza Drive-in

To watch any event listed, scan the QR code or go to holiday.cherokee.com

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**Banquet Server**
**Dishwasher**
**Production Cook**
**Pantry Cook**
**Cocktail Server**
**Housekeeper**
**Valet Attendant Security**

Apply at Jobsthatrock.com
1. Cherokee Casino South Coffeyville: 1506 N. Hwy 169
2. Cherokee Casino Ramona: 31501 US Hwy 75
3. Cherokee Casino Grove: Hwy 59 & E. 250 Road
4. Will Rogers Memorial Museum: 1918 E. Will Rogers Blvd., Claremore
5. Cherokee Casino Will Rogers Downs: 20900 S. 2400 Road, Claremore
6. Hard Rock Hotel & Casino: 777 W. Cherokee St., Catoosa
7. Cherokee Nation Welcome Center Tulsa: 16200 E. Skelly Drive
8. Saline Courthouse: 1/4 mile south on 4400 Road, Rose
9. Cherokee Casino & Hotel: West Siloam Springs: 2210 Hwy 412
10. Cherokee National History Museum: 101 S. Muskogee Ave., Tahlequah
11. Cherokee National Supreme Court Museum & Gift Shop: 122 E. Keetoowah St., Tahlequah
12. Cherokee National Prison Museum: 124 E. Choctaw St., Tahlequah
13. Spider Gallery: 212 S. Water St., Tahlequah
14. Cherokee Springs Golf Course: 700 E. Ballentine Road, Tahlequah
15. Cherokee Casino Tahlequah: 3307 Seven Clans Ave.
16. Cherokee Heritage Center: 2109 S. Keeler Drive, Park Hill
17. Hunter’s Home: 19479 E. Murrell Road, Park Hill
18. John Ross Museum & Gift Shop: 22366 S. 330 Road, Park Hill
19. Cherokee Nation Gift Shop: 17725 S. Muskogee Ave., Tahlequah
20. W. W. Keeler Tribal Complex: 17675 S. Muskogee Ave., Tahlequah
21. Cherokee Casino Fort Gibson, 107 N. Georgetown Road
22. Cherokee Casino Sallisaw: 1621 W. Ruth St.

Events are subject to change.
For the latest information, visit holiday.cherokee.org

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THE 2020 CHEROKEE PHOENIX ART CONTEST WINNER T-SHIRT

THE 2020 CHEROKEE HOMECOMING T-SHIRT

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I

The host of his late father’s forge, Larry Shade carries on a tradition as one of the few Cherokee gig makers still crafting the fishing spears by hand. “When I was younger, I’d come and I’d just help him hammer,” Shade said, whose family has long owned property in northern Cherokee County. “I was probably in my early teens when I actually started, but I know it’s been a lot of people who have been doing the same thing that he did and try to produce the same work.” Shade, 57, is a seventh-generation descendant of Sequoyah, inventor of the Cherokee syllabary. He is also the son of the late Hasting Shade, a former deputy chief from 1990 to 2000 who died a decade ago at age 67. Known as a Cherokee traditionalist, Hasting was widely recognized for his work in cultural preservation and as a skilled artisan. He was designated a Cherokee National Treasure in 1999 for his craftsmanship, which included making gigs.

“My dad made one a long time ago and it was pretty nasty,” Shade said. “He was a little bit rusty and when he hammered it down and finished it, it had some little hairs in it, man, that looked like a dinosaur. I really wanted it, and the first thing he said was maybe. A couple weeks went by and I noticed he didn’t have it anymore, and you know, he said it. It’s like, he made a comment one time. He said, I asked my grandpa to make me a gig. He said if I made you a gig, I’ll always be making you a gig. Let me show you.”

The gigs, which resemble multiple-prong spears, are used for hunting fish, crawdads or other small game. Shade’s third-generation gigs are a “spinoff design” of his father’s and grandfather’s styles. “They include three-prong river gigs, two-prong wooden gigs, haskell carved gigs and more, made from the metal of "buggy" springs, lawnmower blades or old railroad spikes. Poles are assembled from local wood such as ash.”

“Growing up, dad only let us use a single-prong gig,” Shade recalled. “He said if you can hit something with one of these, you’ll make a good gigger.”

For decades, the Shade family has fished the waters of nearby Forteun Mile Creek. “There’s two stumps over there, Shade said. “That’s where me and my brother out when we was 7, 8 years old. We used to go to hear the Cherokee stories, sit and talk. We just grew up eating crawdads and chasing fish. There would be worms, wateress, mushrooms in the woods and in the spring the moths and the wish, eating deer meat, squirreled and rabbit. There is a good feeling that it’s something you worked for that is going to satisfy a lot of hungry bellies and mouths。”

“Growing up, dad only let us use a single-prong gig. He said if you can hit something with one of these, you’ll make a good gigger.” Larry Shade, gig maker

Cherokee Nation citizen Larry Shade forges a fishing gig inside his workshop on Aug. 21, 2019, in anticipation of selling “mawes” at the Cherokee National Holiday.

“The economic impact of the Cherokee National Holiday is very significant to all of the businesses, vendors, and artisans,” Austin Patton, Cherokee National Holiday coordinator, said. “It increased online sales that are transacted safely given the necessity of social distancing. All businesses can benefit from the marketplace as shoppers can locate local businesses through one venue. Those businesses with increasing online sales and puts millions of dollars into the local economy, including sales receipts for vendors and merchants who participate. State and local tax collections can amount to more than $135,000, offsetting the local economic impact.”

“The economic impact of the Cherokee National Holiday is very significant to all of the businesses, vendors, and artisans,” Austin Patton, Cherokee National Holiday coordinator, said. “Weather can also sometimes affect the holiday, but in recent years with a unusually hot weather, visitors have remained engaged and come out in droves. Approximately 100,000 visitors and puts millions of dollars into the local economy, including sales receipts for vendors and merchants who participate. State and local tax collections can amount to more than $135,000, offsetting the local economic impact. "As we all know, this year has presented unique challenges for the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so we are developing a new online Native American artisans peer-to-peer marketplace, where online shoppers can browse the wares of artisans from the marketplace, which is an online one-stop shopping location. The Cherokee Nation looks for creative solutions and through this partnership, we believe this can help Tahlequah businesses adjust to the virtual holiday, as well as the future market, mid- and post-pandemic.”

Anna Knight, Commerce Services executive director, said the Cherokee Nation is “very cognizant of the holiday’s impact, and is working to mitigate the effects of COVID-19.”

“To offset this impact, we are creating an online marketplace,” Knight said. “The Cherokee Nation is underwriting and collaborating with NSU, the Tahlequah Chamber, City of Tahlequah and Main Street to create a Tahlequah Online Marketplace, an online one-stop shopping location. The Cherokee Nation looks for creative solutions and through this partnership, we believe this can help Tahlequah businesses adjust to the virtual holiday, as well as the future market, mid- and post-pandemic.”

Knight said businesses will be provided an online sales opportunity through the marketplace, which would be of greatest benefit to those without an online sales presence.

“Additionally, participating businesses can expect assistance and training in online sales and website creation,” she said. “As residents and the public begin using the online marketplace, businesses can expect increased online sales that are transacted safely given the necessity of social distancing. All businesses can benefit from the marketplace as shoppers can locate local businesses through one venue. These businesses with an online presence may take part in training to optimize their online sales.”

ECONOMIC IMPACT

GIG MAKING

A mong the many boons of the annual Cherokee Na- tional Holiday is the economic windfall, through what is certain to be heated in 2020 by the “cru- al holiday” necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A typical holiday attracts more than 100,000 visitors and puts millions of dollars into the local economy, including sales receipts for vendors and merchants who participate. State and local tax collections can amount to more than $135,000, offsetting the local economic impact. "As we all know, this year has presented unique challenges for the economy due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so we are developing a new online Native American artisans peer-to-peer marketplace, where online shoppers can browse the wares of artisans from the marketplace, which is an online one-stop shopping location. The Cherokee Nation looks for creative solutions and through this partnership, we believe this can help Tahlequah businesses adjust to the virtual holiday, as well as the future market, mid- and post-pandemic.”

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By D. SEAN BOWLEY

TARTER REPORTER

ECONOMIC IMPACT

ANNOUNCEMENT

A countrified holiday website - holiday, cherokee.org - was set to launch at noon on Aug. 10. It will include instructions on how to download the holiday app, register for and watch events online and compete for prizes. Twitter will have CherokeeHolidayDay and Facebook will have #CherokeeNationalHoliday featuring posts to incorporate social elements and to allow "attendees to have a little fun showcasing where they are tuning in from." Patton said.

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By D. SEAN BOWLEY

TARTER REPORTER
DRIVE-IN MOVIE NIGHTS
68TH CHEROKEE NATIONAL HOLIDAY
SEPTEMBER 3–5
8PM ONE FIRE FIELD

FREE FAMILY-FRIENDLY CHEROKEE ENTERTAINMENT!
SPACE IS LIMITED TO ONLY 300 VEHICLES EACH NIGHT.
REGISTER FOR YOUR FREE TICKETS BY SCANNING THE QR CODES BELOW
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A free celebration of Cherokee storytelling, culture and language. Traditions told through film will be brought to a jumbo screen at One Fire Field in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to be enjoyed from the safety and security of one’s own vehicle.

THURSDAY 09/03
CHEROKEE LANGUAGE NIGHT
INCLUDING
• Several Short Films & Animations in the Cherokee Language
• Language Is Everything, The Story of Durbin Feeling

FRIDAY 09/04
CHEROKEE PREMIERE NIGHT
INCLUDING
• 2020 Oklahomies Short Film Contest Winners
• Image’ei Premiere (Cherokee cartoon)
• OsiyoTV Season 6 Premiere
• Totsu (Redbird) Short Film Premiere

SATURDAY 09/05
CHEROKEE WOMEN IN FILM NIGHT
INCLUDING
• Nanyehi
• The Cherokee Word For Water

*BRING AN FM RADIO TO LISTEN
Tucked away on the north end of the Cherokee Heritage Center is the Cherokee Family Research Center, where visitors can learn more about Cherokee ancestry. Of all the genealogists, Gene Norris, senior genealogist, and Charla Nofire, associate genealogist, are the most well-known. They also have a library with books, periodicals and computers available to help people conduct Cherokee ancestry research.Visitors enter the CHC and the CFRC, which are the Dilugua Village or the museum, have access to the CFRC once they pay the entrance fee. “That allows them access to the materials, the computers. They’re on their own to do the research,” Norris said.

When visitors come in, they sign in and are usually greeted by Norris or Nofire and given a genealogy packet that includes websites, a Cherokee genealogy research checklist, a five-generation pedigree chart, maps of the Cherokee Nation before and after removal as well as a Frequently Asked Questions sheet.

Norris or Nofire then talk with visitors about a historical timeline that includes information about the Old Fishers (early Cherokee immigrants), treaties and the Cherokee people’s removal period. Norris said if visitors want him or Nofire to conduct research for them, then a fee is “incurred” for $60 per hour for CHC members and $80 per hour for non-CHC members. “Mostly what they get from us is experience in doing what we do,” Norris said. “We are just so ecstatic when someone comes in that’s just like us, that’s really into their genealogy.”

Norris said visitors who come to the CFRC want to research their ancestors because they may have ancestors who are Cherokee and want to prove it, or want to research their ancestors to become CI citizens. They come to see the resources. They didn’t know we were back here. We have a myriad of different reasons why folks come back here to use us. For the most part, they’re trying to find that elusive Cherokee ancestor,” Norris said.

He said most visitors come with papers, notebooks and documents to trace their lineages, but about 95 to 96% of the clientele “are not able to document their Cherokee ancestry.”

The CFRC works with the tribe’s One Big Family Project and the Family Search organization to provide genealogical records for genealogical research. FamilySearch works with American Indian tribes across the nation in digitizing microfilm archives and records. “It’s opening up a whole (other) avenue to find information, especially with the Dawes Rolls. They digitized the allotment jackets associated with the land allotments (which includes) how much was found in, how much was homesteaded, how much of it was cultivated. It totally fascinates me. They weren’t even done a few years ago,” Norris said. “So much stuff is coming up online and more records are being digitized with things to look at that we never knew in genealogy. So it totally fascinates us.”

For information, call 918-456-6607 or visit cherokeeheritage.org.

BY LINDSEY BARK

In this 2017 photo, senior genealogist Gene Norris and former associate genealogist Ashley Vann, both standing, talk with visitors at the Cherokee Heritage Center’s Cherokee Family Research Center in Park Hill.
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