Cherokee Museum takes over building

Receives deed from Heritage Center

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — The many volunteers who have worked tirelessly behind the scenes on the Museum of the Cherokee in South Carolina now have a place they can call their own.

These volunteers took over an old abandoned building about two years ago, and through hard work and plenty of sweat equity, they've stripped, hauled rubble, put in windows, rewired and rebuilt. Now, they can say the building is theirs.

In recent weeks, the building was officially transferred to the museum's board of directors in a transaction recorded in the Register of Deeds.

The Oconee Heritage Center turned the building over to museum officials.

Museum Curator Luther Lyle said the deed transfer is yet another positive development in the goal to have the museum open for the public in the early fall.

Before the deed transfer, museum officials were operating under a 20-year lease with the Heritage Center. Under the terms of the agreement, the building, once owned by the school district, had to be refurbished and opened as a museum in five years.

"We are way ahead of the game," Lyle said. "We now own the building. It'll be ours no matter what."

Lyle said the property transfer is important because it will enhance the museum's standing and help officials obtain donations and grants for the final push to get the building ready to show exhibits. He said some had been reluctant to donate and gave as one of their reasons that museum officials did not own the building.

Lyle said the artifact room is nearly completed. He said officials need to find a steel door for the room.

Also pending are insulation, dry wall and adding security wiring to the building. "Our goal is to be open by the time students return to school from summer vacation," Lyle said.

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TO DONATE

Send donations to the Museum of the Cherokee in South Carolina, 70 Short St., Walhalla, SC 2969



FILE PHOTO

Luther Lyle stands in front of the Museum of the Cherokee in South Carolina that is scheduled to open in the fall. The building recently was deeded over to the museum's board of directors by the Oconee County Heritage Center. The museum is across from the Oconee County Courthouse in Walhalla.