

libraries.

Cherokee is the first Native language offered by Mango languages, and Cherokee Language Program translator specialists Anna Sixkiller and John Ross helped create two chapters of the 10 language lessons offered by the company.

CN Language Program Manager Roy Boney said most libraries in the area have access to Mango languages. The company offers one of the “most robust” Cherokee language applications he’s ever seen, he said.

“There are a few other Cherokee language apps, but most of them are basic word lists with colors or animals. This one is getting into how you interact, talk and speak back and forth, and the grammar notes explains why the language is the way it is,” Boney said. “It was something new to all of us. They have a linguist assigned to the Cherokee Nation to work with us, and the linguist helped parse out some of the information like the roots (of the language) to help put it together so that it made sense to a learner.”

People will see the written Cherokee language and English phonetics and hear a host explain how the Cherokee language works.

“And then Anna and I will be speaking – introductions, goodbye, and small conversations – in the Cherokee language. That goes on all the way through to lesson 10,” Ross said.

Boney said the partnership with Mango languages came about because Teresa Runnels (Sac and Fox), American Indian Resource Center coordinator for the Tulsa City-County Library, received a grant to develop a Native language project. TCCL CEO Gary Shaffer and Director of Strategic Investments for Cherokee Nation Businesses Jay Calhoun worked with Mango languages to have Cherokee included among the 66 languages Mango languages offers.

“They didn’t know which language to do first, and they went with Cherokee because it’s the most visible with all the technology (used to share the language),” Boney said.

Sixkiller said she and Ross worked on greetings and phrases such as, “what is your name,” “where are you going” and “where are you from.” Phrases one would use when interacting with Cherokee speakers.

“We had to create our own text. We created our own text, then we had to record, and then we also had to review the recording,” Ross said.

He said he and Sixkiller began working on the Mango application in August by watching videos on how the Mango process works. In September, they began gathering phrases and greetings and responses to greetings and finished that portion in October. Recording of their work began in November, and the finished project was released in January.

Each lesson has a different subject matter such as Lesson 2, which includes expressions of gratitude and how to greet people. Each of the 10 lessons has approximately 50 slides, and the lessons build on the previous lessons because people might use a phrase or greeting in Lesson 5 that they learned in Lesson 2.

“You can see the phonetic and tone pronunciation. You can actually record your own voice and compare how you’re pronouncing it to how they’re saying it,” Boney said. “You can have the pronunciation slowed down if you need to hear it better. So it’s got quite a lot of features in it.”

Mango languages also included culture and grammar notes to help people understand the language’s roots.

Ross said he also appreciates the fact a man and a woman converse in the lessons to teach the language. He said he’s seen numerous Cherokee language programs over the years and this one “rates pretty high.”

“We need to target everybody, but I think we need to inspire our young ones in learning our language, and I think this is a good start here,” he said. “They know what we can do with our language now, and we need to get them inspired to learn our language.”

Ross said the Mango lessons can be the beginning of someone becoming a fluent Cherokee speaker, but more importantly people can hear the tone of spoken Cherokee.

“I think that’s the key to learning the language, to be able to hear it all of the time, and it makes it easier to pronounce words,” Ross said.

Boney said a desktop computer version of the program exists, as well as an app version for iPhone and Android smart phones. He said it would take most people a few hours to go through all 10 lessons. The language program is free to people if their library has access to it.

“So, if you have a library card and you’re in Stilwell, and if the Stilwell library has it, you can go in there and log in through the library’s website and use your library credentials to log into Mango for free,” Boney said. “It’s the same with your app, too. You just put in that stuff to get access to it.”

He said people who don’t have a local library or a library that doesn’t have access to Mango can pay to use the lessons on the Mango website or app.

“One of the reasons why we liked this project when we got approached with it was the fact that it does give people an incentive to go to the library, and that’s an underused resource in a lot of communities,” Boney said.

For more information, visit mangolanguages.com . To find a library with Mango, visit www.findmango.com and enter your zip code.

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Will lives in Tahlequah, Okla., but calls Marble City, Okla., his hometown. He is Cherokee and San Felipe Pueblo and grew up learning the Cherokee language, traditions and culture from his Cherokee mother and family. He also appreciates his father’s Pueblo culture and when possible attends annual traditional dances held on the San Felipe

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Education

SHS athletics receives \$15K

BY STAFF REPORTS

03/31/2015 04:00 PM

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CN, Tahlequah to construct waterline around SHS

BY TESINA JACKSON

Reporter

03/29/2015 08:00 AM

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Reporter

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