

BACKGROUND



Who They Are

The Friends of Rentiesville Blues, Inc. (F.O.R. Blues, Inc.) is a non-profit 501 (c)3, formed by award winning Oklahoma State Arts Council roster musicians Selby Minner and the late D.C. Minner, Selby's husband of 31 years and an Oklahoma Blues Legend whose legacy is displayed in seven halls of fame.



Mission

The Friends of Rentiesville Blues Inc.'s mission statement is:
To preserve and develop African American traditional music(s) through education and entertainment.

Festival Background

The Blues: When most people hear the term, they think Memphis or Chicago, New Orleans, and Kansas City. But in Oklahoma, a resurgence of the blues is taking place in a few places, but most notably, the tiny town of Rentiesville.

BACKGROUND



2



The Dusk 'til Dawn Blues Festival got its start when founder D.C. Minner moved back to Rentiesville after more 20 years on the road performing with the likes of Freddie King, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and Lowell Fulson. In 1988, Minner revamped his Grandmother Lura's 1935 Cozy Corner venue, transforming it into the Down Home Blues Club. Three years later, Minner and friends put on the first Dusk 'til Dawn Blues Festival with Little Johnny Taylor headlining and six local bands playing.

Attendance

The first festival in 1991 had quite a turnout with 700 people in attendance. Since then, the festival crowd has grown to more than **3,000** music lovers. Just off Interstate 40 and Highway 69, north of Checotah, the historic black town of 130 people hosts the Dusk 'Til Dawn Blues Festival every year, Labor Day Weekend. People from around the world, literally, from the likes of Australia, Holland, California and Alaska either play at or come out to hear some good ol' blues.



BACKGROUND



Location

103020 D.C. Minner Street Checotah OK 74426

Google Maps: John Hope Franklin Blvd or Gertrude Ave. at 11 th Street

The building is directly across the street from the Civil War Battle of Honey Springs Visitor Welcoming and Research Center.

Local Lodging \$-\$\$\$\$

Hotels

Fairfield in Muskogee \$\$: 918-683-3700. Ask for Shawna.

Muskogee Inn \$: 918-913-9433. Basic lodging, reasonable.

America's Best Value Inn in Checotah \$\$: 918-473-2381. Fills quickly. Blues festival musicians lodge here.

Economic and Local Impact

The festival hires local youth to sell concessions and manage the lot. Local businesses promote their branding on banners displayed at the event. Church communities perform at the festival, and local school music programs supplement their curriculum by attending workshops there. The festival has employed 4,000 musicians since it began in 1991, and has put close to half a million dollars into the pockets of working musicians

The Dusk 'til Dawn Blues Festival, and the blues building--home to the Downhome Blues Club, D.C. Minner Rentiesville Museum, the Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame and F.O.R. Blues, Inc.--is a tourism destination that brings vital dollars to the underserved, historic, rural community from which they operate.

BACKGROUND



More Than a Festival

D.C. Minner passed away in 2008, but his wife Selby, along with the help of many sponsors, friends and volunteers, continues her late husband's legacy not only by being CEO of F.O.R. Blues, Inc., but also through her band Blues on the Move.

The Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame displays pictures of those who have been inducted into the hall since 2004. F.O.R. Blues, Inc. nominates each year's inductees and considers nominations submitted by blues non-profits from across the state. The induction ceremony is an annual event where those who are being recognized receive awards, participate or enjoy performances. In an effort to keep the collection in Rentiesville, F.O.R. Blues, Inc. opened the museum and received grant funding from the East Central Oklahoma Electric Co-operative and the USDA, applying it to infrastructure, air conditioning, and collection preservation supplies.



BACKGROUND



Educational and Historical Impact

Blues is a music born of struggle and survival. Originating in the African-American culture not long after slavery, the music has influenced basically every branch of music since its inception. Lead guitar came from the blues. Crossing between major and minor scales within a tune can be directly traced back to Africa. But while most African music plays along one chord, the multiple chord progressions from Scotch-Irish and English ballads worked themselves into the music. Blues is uniquely American and could only have been created in this hemisphere. Both the back beat and the combo or “group”, consisting of guitar, bass, drums, lead vocalist, harmonica and/or a horn section, came from blues and are the basis of every rock band. The Dusk ‘til Dawn Blues Festival, Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame, D.C. Minner Rentiesville Museum and the Friends of Rentiesville Blues, Inc. board are determined to keep the uniquely African and American tradition in the hearts and minds of the young and aging.



- At the Dusk ‘til Dawn Blues festival, the Checotah High School Jazz Band performs each year on the main stage.
- In the historic building that houses the Downhome Blues Club, Oklahoma Blues Hall of Fame and the D.C. Minner Rentiesville Museum, they
- Teach weekly, affordable bass, guitar and piano lessons
- Host the ongoing JamBand which meets for two hours on Tuesdays from 7-9 p.m. The JamBand consists of a group of students of all ages who just want to play for fun.

BACKGROUND



- Have an extensive archive of music and photos, and a free exhibit—open by appointment--, “D.C. Minner: The Story of How One Man went from The ‘house of Shame’ to Seven Halls Of Fame with his Songs and his Guitar”.



- Ongoing jam sessions on Sundays, nine months out of the year. The jam sessions are a great learning experience for up and comers, and a neat place for professional networking.
- Children attend the festival for free, playing in a dedicated Kids Village in the backyard where they are treated to face painting, costumes, Conga drum circles and arts and crafts.

