

Fall Festival comes to a close; Casting Crowns performs Thursday



Porch Pickin' has always been a fun activity in the mountains. Photo/Lily Avery

By Lily Avery
North Georgia News
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For nine days, the Georgia Mountain Fall Festival celebrated mountain heritage and the beauty of an Appalachian autumn, serenading, entertaining and bringing family-friendly fun to all those who visited from Friday, Oct. 13 through Saturday, Oct. 21.

"The Fall Festival went really well this year," said Hilda Thomason, Fairgrounds General Manager. "Overall, we had good attendance. The first part of it was really good. The booths all did well and we had a bunch of wonderful volunteers that came in and helped.

"Of course, the Lions Club always comes in and helps. It just worked perfectly. It was great. And the weather was absolutely gorgeous."

Some festival favorites of patrons this year was, as always, the Pioneer Village with its nod to the olden days of homemade corn whiskey, blacksmithing, log sawing, quilting, hominy making and more.

This year, after enjoying a leisurely stroll through the exhibit halls, catching glimpses of demonstrations in the village and picking up a must-have homemade item from one of the craft vendors, patrons could enjoy a live performance from not one, not two, but 12 Bengal Tigers, including a beautiful White Tiger.

"Every day the bleachers were full down there for the tiger show," said Thomason. "I had five sets of bleachers down there and it filled up. People were sitting on the ground as well. And the school kids came over from different counties and they all seemed to enjoy it too.

"The tigers were really beautiful and the show was great. The helicopter rides were good too. They were here on the weekends and a lot of people went up to see the beautiful fall foliage from the helicopter. That worked out really well too."

The music shows packed a crowd at Anderson Music Hall. Especially popular, Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder, who keep music lovers entertained on Tuesday.

And while it's sad to see a great thing leave, never fear because the Fairgrounds is busting at the seams with concerts, festivals and events to attend through the end of the year.

First up on the plate, is a concert from Christian music favorite, Casting Crowns, on Thursday, Oct. 26. Tickets for the show are still available, though they are going fast and Thomason advises to purchase a ticket sooner rather than later.

"We've sold somewhere between 1,500 and 1,600 tickets so far," said Thomason. "It's not sold out yet, so you can purchase them at the gate. It's going to be a really good

concert. "It starts at 7 p.m. and the gates will open at 6 p.m."

And following will be the 2nd Annual Appalachian Brew, Que & Stew Festival on Saturday, Oct. 28, which promises to be a great way to spend the last weekend in October with plenty of good food, good drinks and great music.

Next month is sure to be just as exciting, with a Jamey Johnson concert to kick things off on Saturday, Nov. 4, and on Dec. 1, The Beach Boys bring songs from another generation to Hiawassee. And there's also the much-anticipated Mountain Country Christmas in Lights, which will run Thanksgiving Night through New Year's Day.

"We're going to be starting Oct. 30 putting up Christmas lights for the show," said Thomason. "The Christmas lights company is coming to put up all of the displays and lights and get ready for another great holiday season at the Fairgrounds."

For more information on ticket pricing and the many upcoming events, visit georgiamountainfairgrounds.com.



Quilt Makin' is still a popular thing to do in the area, and always in Pioneer Village. Photo/Lily Avery

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and joint effort of the Blairsville Downtown Development Authority and the Union County Historical Society, DDA Program Manager Darren Harper will once again host a spooky screen spectacle the weekend before Halloween.

This Saturday, Oct. 28, will be an outdoor movie night to kick off the holiday weekend and will feature a free viewing of the popular Halloween classic, "Hocus Pocus." The movie will be projected onto a big screen on the lawn of the Butt Mock House, otherwise known as the Mountain Life Museum and Heritage Center, just up from the square.

The Downtown Square

will be closed to thru traffic for the duration of the Hometown Halloween event, and parking can be found all around the downtown area, including at Blairsville City Hall and behind the King's 5 and 10 property.

Also during this upcoming weekend will be the last opportunity to snag a hayride, gallivant through the corn maze and enjoy pumpkin carving fun at Joshua Dream Ranch. Especially for the holiday, the ranch will be hosting its first ever Halloween Spook-Tacular Fest after normal hours on Oct. 27, 28 and 31, from sundown until 11 p.m.

During the event, fright-seekers can enjoy a haunted

corn maze through the ranch and a ghostly goblin glow maze that is sure to bring just the right amount of Halloween horror, though the ranch does promise nothing too scary.

And on Halloween, in addition to Hometown Halloween on the Square, there will be plenty of games, candy and more at the First Baptist Church of Blairsville's Fall Festival, from 6 p.m. until 8 p.m.

This event is open to the public and free of charge.

Regardless of the age or Halloween enthusiasm, there is a little something for everyone to enjoy over the holiday weekend in Downtown Blairsville.

Republican Women of Union County October meeting

The monthly meeting of the Republican Women of Union County was held at 1 p.m. on October 19, 2017.

In honor of National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Deb S. Curlette, President of the S.A.F.E. Board of Directors was the guest speaker. The topic of her speech was "Support in Abusive Family Emergencies, Inc. (S.A.F.E.) and how it serves Towns and Union counties."

S.A.F.E. provides a variety of services to Towns and Union counties. The Domestic Abuse Program includes an emergency shelter for victim families and a myriad of support services. The Sexual Assault Program provides many services including medical accompaniment, support, and a 24/7 crisis line. The Butterfly House Child Advocacy Center assists families through the Child Advocacy Center, family visitation, and placement prevention services. S.A.F.E. also serves Towns and Union counties by providing community education and awareness.

Curlette shared the S.A.F.E. shelter wish list with members. Members agreed to collect items and take them to H. Cook Tire Company, 133 Blue Ridge Street, Blairsville, by October 27, 2017.

All in attendance were also invited to attend the Remember My Name ceremony which was held at 7 PM on October 19, 2017 at Nottely Marina. Said Curlette, "This ceremony honors the 94 Georgians who died in 2017 as a result of domestic violence. The purpose of S.A.F.E. is to help those who have been affected by abuse. Our goal is to keep them from becoming victims."

S.A.F.E.'s 2017 Remember My Name Ceremony has been a partnership between S.A.F.E., Nottely Marina, and Blairsville Rocks. Having a painted rock for every Georgia domestic abuse victim was the "brain child" of Moriah Doucette of Nottely Marina. Members of Blairsville Rocks made this dream become a reality. Nottely Marina donated a beautiful purple LED ribbon

which is visible at night from the Murphy Highway. It will be lit for the next week so local residents can visit this memorial. After that, the 94 rocks will be hidden. It is hoped that through these rocks, the message of stopping Domestic Violence will spread throughout the world.

The next meeting of the Republican Women of Union County will be held on November 16th at 1 p.m.

The Republican Women of Union County are members of the Georgia Federation of Republican Women. The objectives of this organization are to promote an informed electorate through political education, to increase the effectiveness of women in the cause of good government through active political participation, to foster loyalty to the Republican Party, to promote its ideals, and to work for the election of the Republican Party's nominees.

Submitted by Donna Towery, President, Republican Women of Union County