4-day event thanks Marines, veterans for their service

BY CHELSEA COLORADO
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — A four-day event to say "thanks" to Marines and veterans will kick off Monday with a parade and motorcade from Easley to Seneca.

"We want to say thank you," event organizer Tim Callahan said. "We want them to know that Americans do care about what they do on our behalf all the time and what they have done on our behalf."

Forty Marines, which includes locals from the Walhalla, Townville and Anderson areas, will be special guests during the celebration that includes a huge public celebration Tuesday night and other events throughout Oconee County.

The parade will kick things off at 2:30 p.m. Monday in Easley on U.S. 123 and motorcyclists, as well as local public service workers, will escort the guests of honor. According to Callahan, "Last year we had over 420 motorcyclists, but we didn't count all of them, we just stopped counting at 420."

The parade will continue down U.S. 123 and turn onto S.C. 93 where it will go through Clemson and then get back on U.S. 123 to go through Seneca.

"We would like to encourage people to stand along the streets in downtown [Seneca] because that seems to be the area with the fewest amounts of people," Callahan said.

Once the parade is through Seneca it will continue on to Keowee Key where the escorts will drop off the Marines and they will meet their hosts for the next three days.

The motorcyclists will continue to the Tiki Hut and, as thanks for their participation, there will be an appreciation dinner.

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EVENT: Veterans Appreciation Family Night is Tuesday

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The entire parade will end by 4:30 p.m. You can sign up for live eAlerts during the parade at upstatetoday.com.

During Tuesday and Wednesday, the Marines will fish on Lake Hartwell, hike, play golf and tennis and kayak.

Tuesday evening is Veterans Appreciation Family Night at Seneca's Gignilliat Field. This event is open to the public. Entry to the event and the barbecue begins at 6 p.m. and dinner plates can be bought for $4 a ticket, or three for $10. At 7 p.m. the Marines will arrive, as well as local veterans.

"We ask all of the veterans who show up to sign in and register because they typically get a free meal as a result of that. All veterans are recognized during the evening," stated Callahan. The event is free, excluding the barbecue tickets, and includes a concert, kids area with inflatables, and a free fireworks show that begins around 9:30 p.m. Participants are encouraged to bring lawn chairs for seating.

Wednesday evening is the formal dinner for the Marines, hosts, volunteers and sponsors. Thursday is the getaway breakfast for the Marines and once they finish with this event they will go to Clemson's Memorial Park.

"Clemson will take them and have them touch Howard's Rock, run down the hill, tour the fitness facilities and the athletic department hosts them in fellowship and games. They have lunch and then they head back to where they came from on Monday," Callahan said

Although the events on Wednesday and Thursday are closed to the public, due to the size of group, participation on Monday and Tuesday is encouraged.

Sponsors of the four-day event include: The Journal, City of Seneca, Oconee County, Borg Warner, Seneca Fire Department and Seneca Police Department.

ccolorado@dailyjm.com | (864) 882-2375