Blue Ridge Fest boasts another successful year

Staff Reports

PICKENS — Blue Ridge Fest has become one of the largest fund-raising events in Upstate South Carolina. The 12th annual event, held on May 15-16, proved to be successful despite a rain shower on Friday evening and rain that caused cancellation of Saturday's Charity Ride. Charles Dalton, president and CEO of Blue Ridge Electric Cooperative, reported the results. "During the 2009 Blue Ridge Fest we raised $142,000 for 12 local charities. This is second only to last year's total of $145,000. There are so many people to thank for this success — the sponsors, our employees and all of those in the community who came and enjoyed the cars and the great entertainment we had," Dalton said.

A record crowd turned out Friday evening to view the 525 classic cars that filled the grounds and enjoy some of the best entertainment to take the stage at Blue Ridge Fest. Headliner Jerry Butler was a crowd favorite as he sang many of his hits, ending the evening with "For Your Precious Love." Jim Quick and Coastline entertained with their high-energy sound, and the Puzzle Band with Will Ragland as Buddy Holly provided a full segment of Holly's songs.

Sponsors have always been an important part of Blue Ridge Fest, and this year was no exception. The donations of 104 sponsors, led by Premier Sponsor Quality Inspection Services, added to the financial success of this event.

"It's hard to decide who benefits the most from Blue Ridge Fest," Dalton said. "Certainly the people served by the agencies we support benefit, but I firmly believe there are great benefits for our entire cooperative family. During that weekend, we support each other and come together as a team committed to helping those in need within our communities. The joy we receive in knowing that we are working for a greater good is indescribable. I am very proud of our employees and look forward, along with them, to an event that continues to grow and become more important each year."

The 12 Upstate charitable agencies have recently received checks to aid in their assistance to local communities. Charities funded include: A Child's Haven, Anderson Interfaith Ministries, Bethesda Ministries, Collins Home & Family Ministries, Golden Corner Ministries, Haven of Rest Ministries, Hidden Treasure Christian School, Mary's House, Prevent Child Abuse Pickens County, Sabrina House Children's Charity, Tamassee DAR School and United Christian Ministries. Celebrating its 12th anniversary, Blue Ridge Fest has given more than $952,000 to help local agencies since it began.