

# Fall for Seneca

## Festival is perfect for families



FOR THE JOURNAL

The Fall for Seneca Festival will end with a movie on the green. This year, "Mr. Popper's Penguins" will show at around 7:30 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to bring blankets.



A COMMUNITY EVENT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY



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Kids will have a ball at the 2011 Fall for Seneca Festival on Saturday starting at 5 p.m.

BY JESSICA SIBLEY  
THE JOURNAL

**SENECA** — There is something about a fall festival that differs from other times of the year.

As a renewal of sorts, the weather is changing, new vegetation is ripening, colors are brightening and yes, it's the calm before the holiday storm.

Fall is the perfect pocket to relax in, and that's exactly what the city of Seneca believes.

Thanks to the hard work of members and officials at the United Assembly of God, the second annual Fall for Seneca Festival will take place from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday.

The night of fun will take place on the green at Norton-Thompson Park in historic downtown.

Between children's inflatables and a movie, kids will be begging to go.

According to Pastor Steven Stover, he expects this year to far surpass last year's turnout, which is no small feat.

"I was anticipating around 500 people last year and when I got back from showering, there were 2,500 people there," he recalled. "I thought, 'Wow, this is awesome!'"

Stover and his wife Natalie were driving around town last year on a Saturday night when they turned to each other and talked

about how they wished there was something fun for the kids to do.

"Then I said, why don't we throw a huge party downtown," Stover said.

And just like that, his casual suggestion turned into one of the biggest fundraising parties the city has ever seen, and it's all family friendly.

And free!

There will be carnival games, dunk tanks, bounce houses, hot dogs, cotton candy, popcorn and a movie on the green to top off the night.

Last year, the event raised \$2,700 for three charities in the area by charging only \$1. This year, Stover hopes for donations only, which will benefit the Foothills Pregnancy Center.

"In the next few years, I'd like to see everyone in the city of Seneca come out and enjoy the night together," he said.

"For one night, come down, enjoy the fellowship and have a great time with neighbors. That's my biggest hope."

Stover realizes an event like this is the perfect time to help build up not only the city, but the people in it.

"We see a lot of smiles," he said. "It's great to be able to see families come together and enjoy all of this. I'm a father of two, and I really wanted to do something for them. Now, I see all of the children benefit from it. We feel

very blessed."

Kelly Mickerson, Seneca mother of three, went last year and was thrilled.

"You know, for first time festivals, sometimes things don't always go as smoothly as you might like," she said. "Food runs out, lines are long, etc. That's just trial and error and a normal part of festivals. But this was picture perfect. Everyone was so friendly. They had plenty of people working all the different areas. It was casual but controlled, and my kids and I had an absolute blast. I'm very thankful organizations and

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Jennifer Taylors enjoys some cotton candy at last year's Fall for Seneca Festival in Norton-Thompson Park.

churches step up to the plate and hold things like this. It'll be a great start to a beautiful fall weekend."

And for Stover, he said he hopes his expectations for 2011 are blown out of the water.

"We are expecting around 3,000 this year, but I hope I'm wrong again," he said through a laugh. "It's a time to bless our city and our charities while having a lot of fun with our families."