Jazz on the Alley ready to ramp up

BY CARLOS GALARZA-VEVE
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SENECA — WYFF-TV chief meteorologist John Cessarich will broadcast live when the fifth season of Jazz on the Alley kicks off next week.

Seneca events coordinator Riley Johnson said getting Cessarich to bring his popular "John on the Road" WYFF News 4 feature to Ram Cat Alley Thursday beginning 5 p.m. will spotlight the downtown area to an audience around the Upstate.

"Over 1 million people are going to be tuned to this show," Johnson said while advancing the program to city council this week.

Johnson said Funky Factory Jazz, an Atlanta-based female singer featured in the Will Ferrell movie "Anchorman 2," will provide the entertainment.

"You saw her on the big

SEE JAZZ, PAGE A5

JAZZ: Annual series kicks off next week

FROM PAGE A1

screen during Christmas, now you can see her at Jazz on the Alley," Johnson said.

Johnson told The Journal that he saw many raised eyebrows when he first brought the idea of Jazz on the Alley to city officials. He said the event is now a city mainstay.

At the city council meeting Tuesday night, Johnson pitched a new downtown event branded to the growing interest in organic vegetables and fruits. He sees it as a family event where children could have the opportunity to pet chickens, ducks and goats. Johnson said a $500 grant is available that can be used to bring a bluegrass band.

"I understand that in other places they pull up a flatbed truck and then put a band on it and just pack the city," he said.

Mayor pro tem Ronnie O'Kelley said Johnson brought the idea to the events committee Wednesday as well. He said the idea was well received by himself and the committee's other two members, councilmen Scott Durham and Joel Ward.

O'Kelley said Johnson will formally present the organic event proposal at next month's council meeting.

Johnson asked city officials to let him try the event this summer.

"It's another event to get people downtown," Riley said. "It will work, trust me."

For the Jazz on the Alley kickoff, Johnson said samplings of different restaurants will be available, including J Peters, The Spot on the Alley, Pete's and Ye Olde Sandwich Shoppe.

O'Kelley said the events committee also received updates on other events coming up, including "Cruzin on Main," featuring classic cars, music and food every first Saturday of the month beginning April and running through October.

Also, advance tickets are $5 for the May 24 Seneca Fest headlined by John Anderson, the Bellamy Brothers and McKayla Reece. Tickets are $10 the day of the event at the Gignilliat Community Center.

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