Officials keeping close eye on rainfall



JESSICA NELMS | STAFF

Despite a steady drizzle and soggy conditions, crews on Wednesday prepared Sertoma Field for this weekend's 31st annual Oktoberfest event in Walhalla. Cane Creek, which flooded the field last month, is expected to stay in its banks for the popular event.

Flood watch for Oconee and Pickens counties was allowed to expire

BY CARLOS GALARZA
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WALHALLA — Despite soggy conditions, preparations for Oktoberfest went on as scheduled Wednesday as crews ignored a steady drizzle to set up stands, tents and pavilions at Sertoma Field where the annual event is staged.

A flood watch that had been in place for western South Carolina, including greater Oconee and Pickens counties, until 12 a.m. today, was allowed to expire.

Oconee officials said the Wednesday's rain does not compare with the 100-year event of three weeks ago.

Last month, parts of Oconee were drenched with a foot or more of rain that caused creeks and rivers to overflow their banks and roads to be flooded and closed to traffic.

The event swelled Cane Creek, which runs through Walhalla's Sertoma Field. The recreation field off Catherine Street looked like a lake.

That was not the case Wednesday, as Cane Creek remained within its banks and crews continued their preparations for the 31st annual Oktoberfest, which begins Friday and runs through Sunday, and features entertainment, food and exhibits.

On Friday, the forecast for Oktoberfest is 61 degrees.

Public Works Director Mack Kelly said his crews are not taking anything for granted given that many areas remain saturated from recent rain.

"We're only seeing one or two inches of rain in some areas with this," Kelly said. That doesn't come close to what we dealt with last month."

Kelly said his department is taking a proactive approach of clearing away debris from mouths of pipes or culverts to minimize flooding.

"I think we'll be OK," Kelly said. At this point, the rain doesn't seem strong enough to jump the creeks up."

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