Pickens ready to cruise in final night

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PICKENS – Saturday is the last evening for the Cruise 'N and Music on Main in downtown Pickens, and the event designed to lure people to the area has been a bigger hit than officials expected.

"It's more successful than we thought, especially with such little notice," said Pickens City Administrator Katherine Brackett. "We knew it was a good idea because Pickens has such a history with cruise in and the Jeeps are so tied here."

The event, held on three consecutive weekends that included the cruise in and live music, started June 12 with classic cars and was followed by a cruise-in June 19 featuring Jeeps, Brackett said.

Motorcycles will be featured Saturday, she said, but anyone who wants to cruise-in in any type of classic ride is welcome. Preference parking on Main Street will be for the motorcycles.

"We had just over 100 cars at the classic car cruise-in and about 130 Jeeps at our last cruise-in," Brackett said.

She said the first night attracted 1,000 to 1,500 people, a number that climbed to between 1,500 and 2,000 last Saturday.

"The reason that one was so big is we did have the Hinkles from the Hinkle Jeep dealer that used to be here in Pickens," Brackett said.

She said in the '70s the Hinkle dealership in Pickens was the world's largest Jeep dealer before Jeep was bought out by GMC.

"This night for bike night we're expecting an even better turnout," Brackett said. "We hope it's the best of all three ... We want bikes of all kinds to come."

Rachael Brannan, owner of the Corner Grill in downtown Pickens, said the Saturday evening events have helped her business.

"It's been wonderful. It's been great for every business and the turnout has been phenomenal," she said.

"It will bring outsiders into our town and let them see that we are a small town but we do have a beautiful area and good people," she said.

This is the first year for the event, and Brackett said they expect to do it again next year.

"We think next summer we'll probably do the whole month of June, a series again, and we'll theme it," she said.