Salem is cruisin' for toys

BY MIKAYLA KREUZBERGER
THE JOURNAL

SALEM — The town of Salem is gearing up for its second Main Street Cruise-In on Saturday, and town officials couldn't be more excited.

"The Cruise-In is our Toys for Tots kick off event," Mayor Diane Head said. "Last year, we collected over 100 toys just at the Cruise-In alone."

The Cruise-In begins at 5 p.m. and lasts until 8 p.m.

Head encourages the public to bring an unwrapped toy to donate to Toys for Tots and show off their trucks, jeeps and cars on Main Street.

Toys for Tots is a national non-profit toy drive headed by the Marine Corps Reserve. Last year, the organization provided 16 million toys to 7 million children throughout the U.S., according to Tim Callahan.

Callahan is the Marine Corps League Seneca Detachment 1131 judge advocate and Toys for Tots coordinator for Oconee County.

"In 2011, Toys for Tots provided roughly 1,100 children in Oconee County with toys for Christmas," Callahan said. "It's amazing, but there are that many families in Oconee who need our help."

Mayor Head said most of the toys collected at the Cruise-In and throughout Salem during the collection season will be given to children within the Salem community.

"Tim does a great job making sure that the toys go back the community where they were collected," she said. "It's very meaningful to be able to help your community directly. There's usually not a dry eye when the gifts are given out to local children."

Last year, Salem gave 62 children several gifts each through Toys for Tots.

The mayor said that the town became involved in the Toys for Tots program with Detachment 1131 last year after the town successfully served breakfast to wounded warriors through the Marine Corps' Wounded Warrior Project.

"The town and the wounded warriors got along so well, that it was only natural to take on Toys for Tots when they approached us with the idea," Head said.

Toys for Tots collection centers will be made available all over the county. Salem collection centers include Town Hall, Jake's Texaco Gas Station, The Market on Highway 11, the post office and Tamassee-Salem Elementary and High Schools.

Saturday's Cruise-In will feature lives music and barbecue plates will be sold to increase funds for the Salem Fire Department. Non-profit organizations and craft vendors will be in town, as well.

For more information, contact Town Hall at (864) 944-2819.



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Last year's Cruise-In on Salem's Main Street kicked off the town's Toys for Tots campaign that provided 62 Salem children with toys for Christmas. The second annual Cruise-In is Saturday from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m. Be sure to bring an unwrapped toy for Toys for Tots.