competition planned for Seneca Fest

Serious barbecue

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Historically, barbecue was a cheap way to feed a lot of people in the Palmetto State and many other areas in the South.

Today, it's a favorite hobby and tradition among many people, and has long withstood the test of time in a big way.

So big, in fact, that the annual Education Foundation of Oconee County Barbeque Cook-Off at the 2012 Seneca Fest is slated to be the biggest yet.

According to Don Atkins, a representative from the South Carolina Barbeque Association, the competition field is intense in 2012.

"We have 25 teams and the top six teams that compete around the state," Atkins said. "These are the big boys. There is going to be a lot of awesome barbecue. These teams know what they are doing, and, man, they do it well."

The competition kicks off on Friday, where teams are given instructions and ground rules, along with a portion of the 1,800 pounds of Boston Butt pork rounds.

"Each team has their own way of doing things, and it's very interesting to see," Atkins said. "They get down to trimming the meat, injecting marinades and rubbing in spices and seasonings. These guys stay up just thinking about ways to make their product better. They are devoted, that's for sure."

Atkins added that cookers come from all over South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina.

All of the money raised will go to EFOC, which awards teachers "minigrants" to help purchase items for the classroom.

While the cooking and prepping will continue throughout the day on Friday, the public will get a chance to sample all the barbecue their stomachs can handle on Saturday.

Starting at 11 a.m., visitors to Seneca Fest can spend $10 and enjoy a 2 oz. sample of barbeque from each team.

"That's 50 ounces of barbeque," Atkins said. "Most people can't sample all of it, but a lot of them sure do try."

Last year, the foundation raised $13,000, and Atkins said they hope to surpass that this year.

"It's a lot of fun and a great opportunity to try a lot of fantastic barbecue," he said. "We hope to see lots of folks come out to enjoy the day and help raise money for a great cause."

BBQ SCHEDULE

FRIDAY
NOON COOKERS arrive
6 P.M. No Butts About It (Barbecue plates for sale)

SATURDAY
NOON UNTIL 3 p.m. People's Choice barbecue sampling ($10 for a sampling ticket)
NOON UNTIL 6 p.m. Barbecue plates sold for $10.

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Jarod Morgan, left, and Will Van Alstine with the Keowee Cookers begin preparing barbeque for last year's barbecue competition at Seneca Fest.