Fair season comes around again



JOHN C. STEVENSON / Staff

Visitors enjoy the food and the attractions during the opening day of the 46th annual Upper S.C. State Fair on Thursday.

Speedway now a midway

Racetrack transformed by annual Upper South Carolina State Fair

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As if by some kind of carnival magic, at the exact moment the loudspeakers blared the announcement that the gates to the 46th annual Upper South Carolina State Fair had opened, the strong, unmistakable aroma of cotton candy wafted across the entrance, bringing smiles to the early-bird patrons.

Nine-year-old Britney Breasaw of Piedmont said she was excited to ride "all the rides," but that her favorite is the Mouse Trap roller coaster. Britney's mom, Carrie Breasaw, said they try to come every year because Britney likes it.

"I love it!" Britney corrected.

Britney isn't the only person in the Upstate who enjoys the fair.

"This is one of the biggest opening nights for the Upper State Fair," Keith Cochran, marketing director for the fair, said as the colorful lights began to glow in the twilight. "The new rides are, I think, the biggest attraction."

Emma Baldwin of Greenville is another longtime fair fan. This year she was bringing her grandson, Robert Mackey Jr., who turns 4 today.

"I like the atmosphere of the fair," Baldwin said. "And it has a nice selection of rides for my grandson."

For her part, Baldwin said her favorite thing at the fair is the food, especially the funnel cakes and corn dogs.

Cindy and Michael McQueen of Easley also brought a grandchild — 5-year-old Reagan McQueen — to the opening day of the fair. The McQueens said they enjoy looking at the livestock exhibits, and that Reagan likes to ride the live elephant in addition to the more traditional rides.

"She's a daredevil," Cindy McQueen said.

"We don't really ride. We watch the grandkids," Michael McQueen said.

This year's Upper S.C. State Fair runs through Sept. 13.

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For more information, go to www.upperscstatefair.com.