Residents flip for the fair



Chris Crowson, from right, Jamee Anders and Nancy Wilson get a different view of the world as they ride the "Freak Out" at the Upper South Carolina State Fair on Thursday.

Upstate tradition begins with a whirl of activity

By Julie Howle
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As the heat lingered in the air Thursday night, Upstate residents flocked to the fairgrounds along U.S. 123 to tackle the rides, take in the sights and feast on the classic fair food.

The 47th annual Upper South Carolina State Fair kicked off and will run through Sept. 12. Tens of thousands of visitors are expected.

Thursday was a first for one.

"She's really enjoyed herself," Andre Emery said as he took a photograph of his 3-year-old daughter, Ella hanging on tight to a ride with a big grin on her face.

He said it was Ella's first time at a fair.

Emery, who lives in Greenville, said they had mostly gone on rides, eaten good food and won some prizes — a stuffed turtle and a panda bear.

He said they also got to see some animals and a show.

"She loved that little roller coaster," Emery said. "That was her first one ever. She was scared to start with."

Emery said the fair isn't too expensive and gives people "a different venue to come out and enjoy what's good about Greenville and enjoy time with their family and friends."

People meandered through neon-colored rides with names like Zero Gravity and Fire Ball and beside food kiosks with funnel cakes, cotton candy, hamburgers, deep-fried Oreos and much more.

Some rested in the shade alongside games where stuffed animals hung waiting to be won and carried home.

Easley resident Chris Cousins brought his two daughters, 3-year-old Paige and 1-year-old Aubrey, to the fair and said he enjoys watching the people and giving his girls something to do.

"It's a nice thing to have. It's kind of a nice throwback," Cousins said. "I know this is a decades-old tradition."

Greenville resident Ashton Baldwin brought her son Robert Mackey, who will be 5 years old Saturday, to the fair as one of his birthday presents.

She said they both like the rides.

This year, fairgoers will find live music, amusement rides, exotic and farm animals, a demolition derby, a rodeo and much more at the fairgrounds at the Greenville-Pickens Speedway.

Keith Cochran, marketing director for the fair, said, "It was a good start, and the main thing is the weather looks great tonight and for the foreseeable future."

YOU CAN GO

Admission: $6
Parking: $3 per vehicle
Unlimited ride wristbands are $10, $15 or $20, depending on the day
Opportunities for free admission:
Sept. 7 is gate buster night with free admission all night, and Sept. 9 is senior night where all seniors, 60 and older, are admitted free.
For more information, fair hours, activities and prices, go to www.upperscstatefair.com.

See FAIR on page 3B

FAIR

FROM PAGE 1B