



Weather warms for Apple Festival





PHOTOS BY JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL

Above, Shirley Hubbard, left, purchases apples from Amanda Watkins with Grassy Mountain Farms while Easton Bryant, 2, top left, munches on an apple Friday during the Apple Festival in Westminster.

BY MIKE EADS
THE JOURNAL

WESTMINSTER — Friday's higher temperatures did not keep away the crowds for the kickoff of the 2012 Apple Festival.

Vendors along Main Street were pleasantly surprised with the early turnout, well in excess of a thousand people, ahead of what were expected to be big crowds Friday night and all day today.

"We're doing a little bit of business so far," said Lt. Isaac Lewis of the Westminster Fire Department, which is selling department apparel to raise money for the American Cancer Society. Each item sale generates $5 for ACS.

Lewis's chief hopes for a repeat of last year.

"We bought 200 shirts last year and sold 200 shirts ... (today) should be crazy," Fire Chief Chris Smith said.

Westminster Masonic Lodge No. 200 is hoping its food stand raises enough money to continue renovations to its lodge at 206 Retreat St. Past Master Lewis Harbin was encouraged by Friday's lunch sales, but didn't want to predict how much money the lodge will take in this weekend.

"We just started back doing this two years ago," Harbin said. "It's been OK so far, but we may run out of food or have food leftover (today)."

Festival organizers said so far, so good.

"It's been pretty steady all day," according to volunteer Fran Willimon, who predicted several thousand festival-goers to turn out over the weekend.

Today's schedule includes:

• 7 a.m. — 33rd annual Apple Festival 5k/Fun Run Race, sponsored by the West-Oak High School Wrestling Team. It starts in the West-Oak Middle School parking lot.

• 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. — Dutch Oven Cook-Off, sponsored by the Fair Play Boys Camp.

• 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. — Arts and Crafts show, live entertainment, kiddie rides, food vendors all open for business, historic Main Street.

• 10 a.m. — Classic Car Show, sponsored by Crime Stoppers of Oconee.

• 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. – Childrens' activities, historic Main Street

• 8 p.m. — Annual Apple Festival World Championship Rodeo. IPRA Sanctioned. Bibb Street Arena. Tickets sold at gate, adults $12; children $5.

The Apple Festival continues today – check out more photos from the event on page A6.

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