

Westminster planning spring street fest

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FILE

With Mayberry Days off the calendar, the Westminster public relations committee is filling the gap with the first-ever Westminster Street Fest. Committee chairwoman Tonja Watkins said the festival may not match up to the city's annual South Carolina Apple Festival, but it will have a direct impact on local nonprofits.

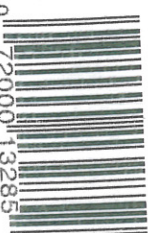
WESTMINSTER — With Mayberry Days officially a festival of the past, the Westminster public relations committee is getting ready to fill a hole in the spring calendar.

Committee chairwoman Tonja Watkins said the first-ever Westminster Street Fest will take place April 26-28. The event will kick off Thursday night, and vendors and activities will cover the streets over the next two days. “We cannot compete with

Apple Fest and Mayberry Days,” Watkins said. “We’re just trying to provide some community activity and entertainment — a means for people to socialize or get out and enjoy Westminster.” Though the dates are locked in, many details of the festival are still in the planning process, according to Watkins. The committee will be accepting vendor applications through March 2 and is working to nail down entertainment options to fill the schedule. “We are going to be doing some things for the children,”

Watkins said. “We’re getting quotes for things like games and inflatables, and we’re still in the researching and planning part of other activities.” Even if games and fried food are the front of the festival, the main focus is a bit more behind-the-scenes than Sno-Comes and handmade crafts, according to Watkins. The vendor fees of \$50 for crafts and goods and \$100 for food vendors will go to nonprofits that directly

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benefit Westminster. Each vendor is allowed to choose an organization off the list on the application. “This festival doesn’t benefit the city itself,” she said. “The city will not profit from this at all — it’s only paying out to provide this opportunity. The only gain here is the nonprofits and the community.” Watkins noted the committee isn’t requiring payment up front from vendors. Until they are confirmed to attend the festival, the donations don’t hit the bank. This helps limit the types of items sold so that the weekend isn’t saturated with one type of good. “If everybody is selling clothing or makeup, nobody is going to do well,” Watkins said. “We want to provide an environment that’s most beneficial to our attendees and business owners — not to mention the nonprofits.”

Organizations benefiting from the inaugural festival will be American Legion Post 107, American Legion Auxiliary Post 107, Dot’s Kitchen, Gateway Arts Center, Grace’s Closet, Lazy Daisy Garden Club, Sons of the American Legion Squadron 107, Westminster Boy Scouts, Westminster Music Centre and Westminster Rotary Club. Committee secretary Lacey Watkins said many vendors are familiar faces to the November holiday bazaar, but they’re open to just about anything. “There will be a lot of the same vendors and a good bit of new ones, because we can open this one to food vendors,” she said. “We’re pretty wide open as to what we can get.” The Westminster Street Fest will be held on Main Street and in the depot parking area, according to Tonja Watkins, giving the new festival a familiar feel.

“This will be a little bit different than the typical festivals the city has seen, because ones in the past have been planned by private organizations,” she said. “There were a lot of requests to bring something back since Westminster no longer had Mayberry Days, so our hope is that we’re giving people a bit of a new spring tradition.” The festival is set to take place rain or shine. Applications for vendors are available at city hall or by emailing westminsterprcommittee@gmail.com. For those interested in serving food, DHEC regulations are available with the application.

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