

## What's new at the N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival?

This year's N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival will begin with a sizzle and proceed with the sounds of country music, beach tunes and rock wafting over downtown Whiteville streets lined with craft and food vendors.

The second Burger Brawl will be Friday, Nov. 3, with cooks firing up their grills at 5 p.m. and judging beginning at 6:30. A performance by the Rivermist Band on the festival stage will coincide with the cooking competition. This year members of the public will have an opportunity to sample the burgers and vote on a "people's choice" winner.

Also starting at 5 p.m. on Nov. 3 is a pie contest. This new event will award cash prizes of \$50 to \$250 for the best homemade pecan pies. Registration is open through Friday, Oct. 27.

Festival organizers hope burger-battlers and bakers will check out the rules for both contests, available at ncpecanfestival.com.

The 2023 festival will not feature a Friday luncheon or home tours as in past years, organizers



announced Oct. 7. The festival committee thanked the 114 homeowners who have hosted

tours over the previous 19 years. Scheduled events on Saturday. Nov. 4, are the car show at 8 at noon on the festival stage.

a.m., the parade at 10 a.m. and a performance by The Pink Slips

Vendors will sell food, drinks and craft items in the downtown

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# Faulk-Frink is grand marshal

Faulk-Frink, Ms. Black North Carolina 2023, is this year's N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival grand marshal.

It's been said of Faulk-Frink that she "wears many hats," and that was true even before she won her tiara in statewide pageant competition on Dec. 18, 2022, or the coveted "People's pageant on Aug. 5.

Faulk-Frink currently has a bachelor's degree in clinical laboratory science and an associate degree in nursing from ECPI University. She is an aspiring medical school student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine. Her plans are to become

a cardio-thoracic surgeon.

Faulk-Frink is the founder of two small businesses and a nonprofit organization, initiated in 2015 when she became the CEO/Founder of Her Highness, Inc., an empowerment mentorship organization for girls and women in North Carolina communities. Her nonprofit hosts a free annual week-

Chadbourn native Tatyana Choice" honors at the national long summer camp, business and networking brunches and college fairs. It also actively provides community Christmas assistance and scholarships.

> In addition to being a medical student, entrepreneur and nonprofit founder, Faulk-Frink is a community leader and woman of faith. She believes that every gift and every talent are uniquely created within each person for the sole purpose of serving and uplifting God. She is known for her saying "You can!"

> Faulk-Frink's focus during her one-year reign is advocating for equitable access to healthcare, particularly in the Black community, which has been historically and traditionally underserved and underrepresented in healthcare. She said she hopes to use her reign as Ms. Black North Carolina to promote her platform and draw inspiration for small-town girls like herself, showing that the same talent exists within them to do and be anything.



**Festival Grand Marshal Tatyana Faulk-Frink** 





# First responders, law enforcement chefs to 'brawl' over best burgers

Vineland Station Depot will be the site of the second First Responders' Burger Brawl on Friday, Nov. 3, beginning at 5 p.m.

In this opening event of the 2023 N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival, "Our local first responders will cook up their unique burger creations," the volunteer organizing committee announced. "First place prizes will be awarded in two categories — one picked by a panel of judges based on five judged factors of the burger and one voted as 'fan favorite' by those attending the Brawl. Winners own 2023 Bragging Rights and can claim the N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival's First Responders' Burger Brawl Trophy."

This year's burger battle will offer opportunities for audience participation as well, according to the festival website, ncpecanfestival.com.

While supplies last, cooking teams will offer bite-size burgers to spectators, who will choose the "fan favorite" winner. This year there

will also be "fun stuff for the kids, a beer and wine garden, a live band and much more," according to the festival organizers. Brawl attenders may contribute to teams' "tip jars" for charities.

Rivermist Band will be performing at the Festival Stage during the evening.

In a double-blind operation, a team of three judges will sample the fullsize burgers and score them numerically in five categories: freshness of bread, size of burger, presentation/ appeal, texture/temperature and taste.

Full contest rules are listed on the site, including specifics of decorations, cooking methods, timing and cleanup.

A team from the Columbus County Sheriff's Office won the inaugural burger brawl in 2022, beating Whiteville police and fire departments, Whiteville Rescue Unit, Nakina Fire and Rescue, Tabor City Fire Department and the N.C. Highway Patrol.



Whiteville Police Chief Doug Ipock takes a turn at the grill during the inaugural Burger Brawl in 2022.



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Community College Southeastern President Chris English prepares to present the Burger Brawl trophy to the winning team in 2022.



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They say, "Ain't no party like a Rivermist party 'cause a Rivermist party don't stop!" Rivermist has been voted "Best Local Band of Fayetteville/Ft. Bragg" eight years running by the readers of Up & Coming Weekly. It was voted Carolina Country Music Association's Vocal Group of the Year for 2021. The band was also nominated for the "Rising Star" award by the Carolina Beach Music Academy in 2022 and nominated for "Rising Star" and "Best Video" in 2023. Come hear one of the East Coast's best vocal bands when Rivermist kicks off the 2023 N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival on Friday, Nov. 3, at Vineland Station from 5-8 p.m.





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### **Festival Schedule**

Friday, Nov. 3

First Responders' Burger Brawl

5–8 p.m. Vineland Station Depot

**Rivermist Band** 

5–8 p.m. Vineland Station Depot

Saturday, Nov. 4

N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival Parade

10 a.m. Madison Street

Pink Slips Band noon Main Stage













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# Car show attracts competitors from across the region

By Diana Matthews

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"Right at a hundred" cars were on display in downtown Whiteville during the 2022 N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival's car show, said Danny LeSane, vice president of the Classic Cruisers Club, which coordinates the event. Vann Underwood Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram is the show's sponsor.

LeSane expects another good turnout in 2023. "Any kind of classic car" is welcome. "Mustangs, Novas and Chevelles" are some of the models visitors to the show can expect to see, along with a few newer types. Car owners pay \$25 to enter and have the potential to win trophies in a total of eight categories, including "people's choice."

This is Classic Cruisers Club's third year running the pecan festival's car show. It will also hold a show at the Tabor City Yam Festival on Saturday, Oct. 28, he said.

LeSane describes his fellow car club members as "a lot of friendly people" and says they enjoy being part of the pecan festival's "nice family atmosphere."

Starting at 8 a.m., two hours before the parade, car owners set up chairs next to their vehicles on downtown streets. Then they spend the day socializing with one another and answering questions from passersby. LeSane said the show "brings back memories" for many festival-goers. "They might've had one of those

>> SEE CAR SHOW 13



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#### **CAR SHOW**

Continued from 12

cars back in the day."

Judging will begin at 1 p.m., and winners will receive their trophies at 4 p.m.

The Classic Cruisers Club includes about 20 active members, but owners from across southeastern North Carolina bring their cars to the Whiteville show. "A lot of people come out of South

Carolina" as well, LeSane said. "Everyone looks forward to it. You see people you don't see all year."

Besides the enjoyment of classic cars, LeSane said the club's purpose is "to be a help to someone less fortunate" by raising money for charities. Wayne Dove of Dublin is one of the few founders of the club still living, and Stuart Norris of Elizabethtown is also a leader in the club.

Columbus County members include Clark and Mary Dowless and Terry Libby. The club has a Facebook page where those interested can learn more about its activities.

Festival day spectators can also be winners in a 50/50 raffle, LeSane said.

Whether people are classic car enthusiasts or just onlookers interested in having a good time and taking a

chance in the raffle, LeSane urges everyone to "Come on out and enjoy themselves at the pecan festival" on Nov. 4.

For more information about the car show, the number to call is 910-876-3582.







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### Parade-goers can expect music, fun and excitement Saturday morning

#### **By Diana Matthews**

dianamatthews@nrcolumbus.com

When 10 a.m. strikes on Saturday, Nov. 4, Charlie Duncan will signal the first entries in the N.C. Pecan Harvest Festival Parade to pull out of their staging area on W. Smith Street and begin their 1.4-mile southward route.

He's been the man behind the parade since it began. And "behind" is a literal description: Duncan never gets to see the parade from the side as a typical festivalgoer sees it, but always from the back as he waves each unit off.

#### Making it happen

Duncan doesn't assign units their spots in the lineup until they arrive at the starting area, but he said he lines up "queens on the left and everyone else on the right," with dignitaries in front and emergency services in the rear. This year, Miss Black North Carolina Tatyana Faulk-Frink is the parade's grand mar-

"We have to start at 10 sharp," Duncan said, because it's important to have the parade "over by 11 when everything cranks up downtown." Duncan said the hours before the parade are "a frenzy" of activity as "40 to 50" floats, bands, golf carts, vehicles and other parade entries gather.

When the hour comes, Duncan signals the waiting entries to pull out one by one. He determines the order as he goes, his top priority being to create variety. At his signal, the princesses and politicians, candidates and clowns, churches and charities, businesses and bands start moving and become a parade.

#### Free advertising and advice

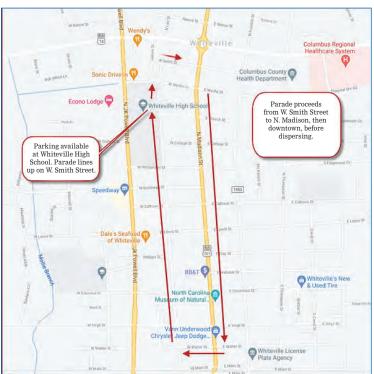
This year's starting point is a change from past years when entries gathered in front of Whiteville High School.

"The parade is free unless you're a queen," Duncan said. Pageant royals pay \$30 to be in the parade, with proceeds going to local charities, according to the registration form. Anyone else with a business, church, sports team or civic club to promote would be "crazy not to get in the Pecan Festival parade," Duncan said. "It's a good way to advertise."

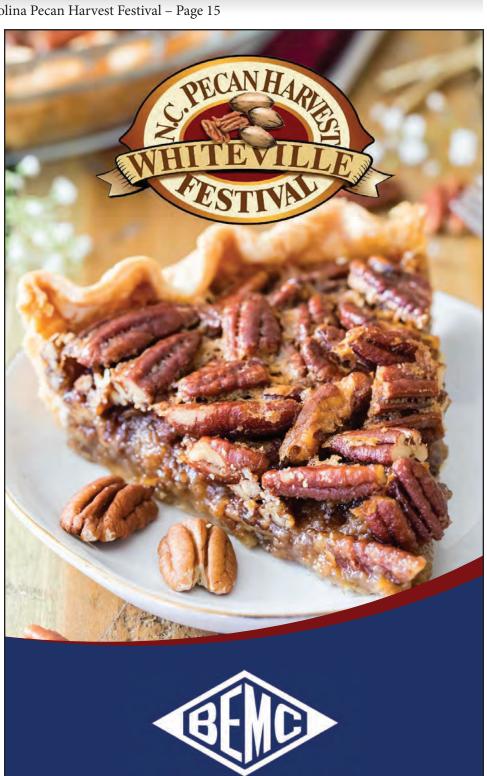
Duncan learned the art of parade directing from Charlie Langston, who used to run Whiteville's Christmas parade when the Lions Club put it on. He said he got the job in the '70s or '80s, the Jaycees took it over. When the Pecan Harvest Festival began holding a parade, "I was the first one they called" to direct it, he said.

Duncan tells prospective entrants, "Just use your imagination." From his decades of experience, he says that, "You can see some good stuff in a parade." When he sees a creative new float or other entry, he finds himself commenting, "That's a good idea. Why didn't I think of that?" Year after year, "I'm always surprised at the things people come up with."

Anyone with parade-related questions may call Duncan at 910-642-5004 or 840-1497.



Parade Route



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