

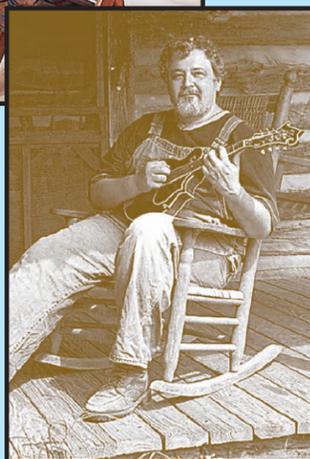


Performing April 9 at Turnage Theater



This year's Beaufort County Music Festival will open April 9 with a concert at the Turnage Theater in downtown Washington. Featured performers are Lipbone Redding (top) and Holy Ghost Tent Revival. (Contributed Photos)

Performing April 10 at Turnage Theater



Performing during the festival's featured concert April 10 at the Turnage will be Alice Gerard (top), Jack Lawrence (middle) and Tony Williamson. Show time is 8 p.m. (Contributed Photos)

Planning begins for spring music festival

By KEVIN SCOTT CUTLER
Lifestyles & Features Editor

With winter not yet over, three local residents are already looking ahead to spring.

Joey Toler, executive director of the Beaufort County Arts Council, Vail Stewart Rumley, vice-chair of the BCAC board of directors, and Rob Cuthrell, steering committee chair of the Beaufort County Traditional Music Association, are hard at work planning this year's Beaufort County Music Festival, to be held in downtown Washington.

The first festival was held last year and was named the Beaufort County Traditional Music Festival — notice "Traditional" was dropped from the title this year.

But that isn't a bad thing, Cuthrell insisted.

"That's part of our goal to attempt to branch out and appeal to a wider demographic," he said.

"But the festival is still acoustically driven," Toler added. "It's still very much about roots music."

Last year's one-day festival has also grown to three days, April 9-11. It opens with a Friday night concert, continues Saturday with events all day and concludes Sunday with an old-fashioned gospel sing.

"Last year, we had about 2,000 people," Cuthrell said. "It was well received so that's why it's being expanded. We've got a year behind us and we're going to be promoting it a lot more this time."

The Friday night concert, and another set for Saturday night, are ticketed performances at the historic Turnage Theater, but most everything else is free. The Friday show features Lipbone Redding, son of Washington resident Lawrence Behr, and the group Holy Ghost Tent Revival. The line-up for Saturday's show includes Alice Gerard, Jack Lawrence and Tony Williamson.

Show time each evening is 8 p.m. Advance general admission tickets are \$12, with children 12 and under admitted for \$10. All tickets purchased at the door the day of the concert will be \$15 each.

Saturday's schedule will offer something for just about everyone, Toler said.

"The way it's shaping up right now is the Civic Center is

going to be the dance hall," he said. "We're planning clogging performances and workshops, contra dance, possibly a step team and a band for a country-western dance. But everything is subject to change, except for the ticketed events at the Turnage."

An outdoor pavilion will be home to several events that should draw in a younger audience, including the popular local band, Carolina Still. Saturday events are also planned at the Turnage, and jam sessions, workshops and a variety of musical performances are being organized.

The festival will include an artists' market offering original work by regional artists and crafts people, according to Toler. Billed as a "green event," the festival will host vendors offering information and products related to recycling, organic gardening, healthy living and healing arts.

"We're looking for vendors that reflect the green aspect of the event, whether it's information, products or food," Toler said.

"We're going to try to do a movement tent, an area where we

will be offering segments on yoga and tai chi, and we've talked about getting the big adult hula hoops," Rumley said.

The festival is partnering with the North Carolina Estuarium for programs that will include storytelling and children's activities.

Members of the Beaufort County Traditional Music Association are also planning a new venue in addition to their jam tent, where they'll have workshops and other performances, Cuthrell said.

"The key is to broaden our appeal, but still keep it family-friendly and showcase local and regional music," he added.

Sunday's gospel sing will run from 11 a.m. until 3 p.m. and will be the perfect way to close out the festival with traditional music, Toler said.

More details about this year's festival will be available in upcoming editions of the Washington Daily News.

Artists, musicians and vendors interested in taking part in the festival can e-mail Toler at beaufortcountyarts@embarqmail.com or call 252-946-2504.

Ticket inquiries about the Friday and Saturday night concerts should be directed to the Turnage Theater by calling 252-975-1191 or by visiting www.turnagetheater.com.



Snapshots from last year's Music Festival

