

Organizers anticipate largest ever car show at Fairgrounds

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Memory Lane Classic Car Show organizers gathered at Jerry and June Smith's Classic Car Museum on Tuesday, April 6, to plan for the upcoming major event running April 30-May 1.

Helping to bring in the crowds will be the Smiths' sports legend friend Otis Nixon, and both Evander Holyfield and Andrew Jones have been invited to attend so may be there as well.

John Wilkinson, Doug Collins and David Ralston will also be in attendance, as will other VIPs invited by Jacky Jones, the Smiths and the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

The show is sure to be a terrific attraction for the Fairgrounds, which is hosting the second day of the event, and is likely to herald a successful year after many event postponements in 2020 due to COVID-19.

For perspective, the Fairgrounds hosted 22 concerts in 2019 but only two in 2020, and General Manager Hilda Thomason said she is more than ready to make up for the COVID deficit.

"I think this will be the biggest car show we have ever had," Thomason said. "Jerry Smith has done a lot to help us out. We are excited for the event and hope everyone comes out to see us."

The Smiths use their im-

pressive classic car collection and museum in Young Harris to raise money for local charitable giving. In fact, the purpose of this car show is to serve as a fundraiser for new seating in the iconic Anderson Music Hall.

Already, the effort has resulted in over \$25,000 in pre-show fundraising, including exclusive dinner reservations, swap meet registrations, vendor signups, ticket raffles, donations and more, and Thomason is hopeful they'll be able to raise \$100,000 when all is said and done.

At 10 a.m. on Friday, April 30, the show will kick off at the Memory Lane Classic Car Museum at 1195 Jack Deyton Circle, with a parking lot full of enthusiasts from all over the country showing off their classic cars.

And on Saturday, May 1, the event will move to the Fairgrounds, where starting at 9 a.m. people can take advantage of craft vendors, music, arts & crafts, food, prizes, and yes, more classic cars.

The spectator fee for each day will be \$10 per person, and children 12 and under get in free.

A live auction will be held May 1 at 3 p.m. at Eller Holler Stage, to feature Chase Elliott sports memorabilia, lodging packages, a Cadillac and more. Ford and Chevy engine raffle tickets are still available, and winning tickets can also be redeemed for \$5,000 in cash.

The Smiths will be donat-

ing \$5,000 toward the Towns County High School Baseball Team, which has been helping with fundraising efforts.

Smith said he anticipates around 900 cars in attendance since it is the first large car show of the season and people are eager to get out, especially after so many COVID cancellations in the past year.

"I think you are going to have as many cars as you can put in here," Smith said, a bold prediction that has prompted the Fairgrounds to prepare for overflow parking to house the variety of cars ranging from classic muscle to modern sports.

Vendors interested in the event still have time to sign up as some spots remain available, with current requests for both food and craft vendors. For information on becoming a vendor, call Shannon Nguyen at 678-365-6289.

There are other opportunities to get involved, as the Fairgrounds is searching for event volunteers, with each volunteer set to receive a shirt for participating. For more information on volunteering, call 706-896-4191.

"We will probably need 20 or 30 volunteers just to help out with registration and getting the cars in the Fairgrounds," Thomason said. "We really want people to come out and help us put this thing on. It is great for our area, and we are really excited."

Following the car show



This shiny classic Cadillac is being donated by Jerry Smith for auction during the Memory Lane Classic Car Show.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener



Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason spoke in an April 6 meeting on the possibility that as many as 900 classic cars might be coming to the Memory Lane Classic Car Show April 30-May 1.

Photo by Jarrett Whitener

on Saturday night, the Fairgrounds will host famed country and gospel singer Josh Turner for a big concert event that has already sold 2,300 tickets, with Thomason believing it will sell out in no time.

Thomason has been busy booking new concerts for 2021, including the Atlanta Rhythm Section and Orleans, the tickets for which go on sale April 16 for a June 5 show. Of course, folks can still get tickets for this Saturday's concert featuring breakout country music artist Chris Janson.

"We're in the entertain-

ment business, and that's what we want to do – put smiles on people's faces and make sure they have a good time," Thomason said. "And please come out to enjoy nature and purchase some plants at the Hamilton Gardens."

For more information on upcoming events, visit GeorgiaMountainFairgrounds.com. People will be interested to know that the new Music Hall seating will feature individual seats available for purchase in honor of others, though purchase details are still being considered.

Dispatchers...from Page 1A

Dyer said. "Y'all do a great job, and we rely on you. You're the only thing that we've got when we do get in trouble, and when we need something, y'all are it. We really appreciate it more than you know."

Before COVID-19, local law enforcement and other first responders used to head over to E-911 headquarters just to visit, offer feedback, or provide updates for dispatchers who worked certain calls but whose time with an emergency ended once dispatched help arrived.

Since COVID-19, however, outside visitations have largely ended for safety reasons, including from fellow first responders.

"I miss being able to come up here and getting to know everybody," Maj. Dyer said. "There's quite a few in here I do know and there's a few in here I don't really know. Maybe before too long, we can get that hanging out, because that's important."

For their part, the gathered dispatchers wholeheartedly agreed with Maj. Dyer's sentiment, even requesting on the spot that such visitations resume soon, which 911 Director Dyer said he would take under advisement.

"Nobody can do this job except for y'all," Director Dyer said. "Every time I get to looking at all the things that y'all do and try to jump in there a little bit, I know I can't do that. Y'all really are special people."

In 2020 alone, local dispatchers fielded a whopping 32,925 separate computer-aided dispatch incidents, most of which required multiple other communications per call coordinating responses by the Fire Department, Sheriff's Office, Emergency Medical Services and more.

Of course, it's not easy, but the dispatchers of Union County do their best to set each and every emergency response up for success, from frantic domestic abuse calls with screaming victims on the line to individuals needing help



911 Director David Dyer looking on as Sheriff's Capt. Craig Davenport shares words of gratitude for the hard work dispatchers do on the other end of the radio. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

in any number of mundane situations.

Lt. Baxter, who oversees the day-to-day operations at E-911 and was celebrating her 24th anniversary dispatching in Union County that same evening, said she wouldn't be able to do the job she does without the assistance of her phenomenal crew.

"I would put y'all up against any dispatchers in the state," Baxter said. "Y'all do amazing, and I just want you to know that I really do appreciate you."

At the end of their staff meeting that Thursday, the dispatchers each received an appreciation-themed backpack and water bottle as a gift, and for their special week this week, they will be treated to a free beverage of their choice, such as coffee or a milkshake from around town.

The appreciation is much appreciated, too, as dispatchers often work through incredibly tough calls each shift. For example, they may find themselves on the phone with someone who is dying and hear their last words, or even have to handle the emergencies of people they know and love.

And there are many more reasons dispatchers are

thankful for awareness efforts like National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

"It helps people to realize what we do, that we're not secretaries or clerks," Dispatcher Lynn Powell said. "It's like when I worked EMS, we were more than just ambulance drivers – we did a lot more than that. This helps the community to realize what we actually do in our community."

Union County E-911 consists of Director David Dyer, Lt. Millie Baxter, and Dispatchers Carrie King, Ashley Churchill, Lynn Powell, Kasey Rafter, Amanda Hammond, Marlana Bryson, Heidi Morris, Mary King, Holley Kemp, Kayala Messer and Rebecca Holcombe.

All told, the 13-person crew of 911 first responders wants people in the community to know that "we're all in this job because we care about the people of this county."

Appreciation efforts will continue in Sole Commissioner Lamar Paris' April 20 regular meeting that is open to the public, in which he will be presenting a special proclamation recognizing the hard work of the local dispatchers.

Mask Mandate...from Page 1A

mask, Osborn said.

When two employees insisted Holloway don a mask per store policy, he allegedly became angry and threatened to damage one of the employee's vehicles, "and it even escalated to him threatening to kill one of the employees in the presence of the other employee," Osborn said.

The employees called Union County E-911, which dispatched Deputies Andrew Neal and Jose Carvajal to the disturbance. By the time deputies arrived, Holloway had vacated the premises, Osborn said.

"They were given a description, looked at video, and they knew who he was at the store – everybody knows everybody in Suches," Osborn said.

Deputies Neal and Carvajal traveled to Holloway's residence to make an arrest, during which Holloway



reportedly became "belligerent" and began "fighting with them" as the deputies struggled to place him in a patrol car, Osborn said.

While resisting arrest, Holloway caused a head injury to one of the deputies and damaged a patrol car before finally being placed inside the car and taken to jail, Osborn said.

Sheriff Mack Mason commended the deputies for a job well done during the difficult encounter, saying that, thankfully, the injured deputy received only minor injuries

and is doing well.

"People need to respect the law's authority, or they might wind up with some extremely serious charges such as in this case," Mason said.

In a separate incident at the Wolf Pen Gap Country Store on April 1, deputies arrested Gary Porter, 63, of Suches, on a misdemeanor charge of selling alcohol to a minor.

His arrest stemmed from a February sting operation conducted by the Sheriff's Office, in which an informant under the age of 21 entered several local convenience stores to attempt alcohol purchases.

Porter is alleged to have checked the informant's identification, which showed underage, before selling the alcohol anyway.

The above individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.