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Central celebrates railroad history with festival

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The Central Railroad Festival will pull into historic downtown Central Saturday, April 28, with music, great food and festivities for all ages.

The Railroad Festival celebrates the rich heritage of Central, so named because the town is situated at the “central” point of the railroad line between Atlanta and Charlotte.



The festival begins at 10 a.m. and runs until 6 p.m., featuring entertainment, food, music and arts and crafts vendors.

“The Central Railroad Festival has activities for the entire family,” said Bobby Ballentine, festival organizer. “Come spend the day, enjoy the entertainment and the great variety of food. There are tons of free activities for the kids.”

Free entertainment for children will include the Fun Express, model train displays, a musical show for children, a balloon artist, a tractor train ride, face painting and a Thomas the Tank Engine display. Also open for free tours will be the Central Railway Museum, which features a large HO-scale model railroad layout complete with cities, towns and features found in the region more than a half century ago. The museum also houses a Heritage Room, featuring classic model trains popular in the mid - 20th Century. Also, there will be a tour of the Central red caboose.

Live music and entertainment will be in the spotlight throughout the Railroad Festival. The entertainment lineup is:

- 10 – 10:10 a.m. – Welcome and National Anthem
- 10:10 – 11 a.m.: SWU Jazz Band
- 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m./3 – 4 p.m.: Randy “Elvis” Bonneval
- 1 – 2:30 p.m.: Tony Tidwell
- 4:30 – 6 p.m. – Flying Saucers

Entertainment in the kid's area, near the caboose:

- 10:30 – 10:45 a.m./12:30 – 12:45/2:30 – 2:45: La Dance Studio of Pickens
- 11 – 11:30 a.m./1 – 1:30 p.m./3 – 3:30 p.m./4:30 – 5 p.m.: Music and Magic Show
- 11:45 a.m. – 12:15 p.m./1:45 – 2:15 p.m./3:45 – 4:15 p.m.: Hot Foot Cloggers

Central restaurants will be open on the day of the festival, offering options of Mexican, Oriental, Coffee House and Deli Specialties, plus Seafood. Street vendors will also cater to a variety of tastes, offering pizza, hot dogs, barbecue, nachos, corn dogs, hamburgers, sandwiches, funnel cakes, chicken wings, crab cakes, Italian ice, kettle corn, fried Oreos and more treats.

Clemson Area Transit buses will run continuously, taking festival-goers from parking areas, which include Central Town Hall, New Life Church, Cannon Memorial Baptist Church and Duckett-Robinson Funeral Home. There will also be bus tours of nearby historical sites, including the Central Heritage Museum and Collins Ole Towne, a recreated 1920's-era village.

Admission to the festival is free and convenient parking is available.

“There isn't a festival anywhere that has the variety of free activities for the entire family that you can find at the Central Railroad Festival. Bring the entire family and spend the day. Everyone will have a blast,” Ballentine said.

The Central Railroad Festival is sponsored by the Central Area Business Council and the Clemson Area Chamber of Commerce. The festival is supported by the Town of Central and the Central Railway Museum.

For festival details, call Lindsey Newton at (864) 654-1200 or visit the Central Railroad Festival website at www.centralrrfestival.com. The site includes a map of convenient parking areas.

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