

Heritage center to unveil historical markers

For the Johnstonian News

SMITHFIELD — The Johnston County Heritage Center and Heritage Commission will unveil five historical markers in various Johnston County locations during June and July.

Each unveiling ceremony will feature special speakers, historical drama, music and refreshments. The public is invited.

The first unveiling will be 10 a.m. Wednesday at First Missionary Baptist Church, locat-

ed at the corner of Fourth and Caswell streets in Smithfield near the original location of a two-room freedmen's schoolhouse built in 1868-69.

Refreshments will be served in the church fellowship hall following the ceremony.

"According to the staff of the North Carolina historic preservation office, this is the only freedmen's schoolhouse known to be left standing in the state," said heritage center Director Todd Johnson. "It is thought

to be one of only five or so left in the nation, making it an extremely rare piece of history."

Other marker unveilings scheduled include:

- 11 a.m. Friday at Atkinson's Mill, 95 Atkinson Mill Road, Selma. A barbecue lunch complete with Atkinson's hushpuppies will be served after the ceremony.
- 10 a.m. Friday, June 28 at the Hinton's Quarter Courthouse site near the East Front Street roundabout in Clayton.

A reception hosted by the Clayton Historical Association will be held in the clubhouse of Arbors at East Village, 56 Bent Branch Loop.

- 10 a.m. Saturday, July 6 at the Gov. Benjamin Williams birthplace site, 3390 Grabtown Road, Smithfield. The Smith-Bryan Chapter of the Daughters of American Revolution will host a reception. Camp Flintlock will provide 18th century entertainment.
- 10 a.m. Saturday, July 20 at

the Catch-Me-Eye Explosion site near the intersection of U.S. 70 and U.S. 301 in Selma.

These historical markers have been made possible by a matching grant from the Johnston County Visitors Bureau and by gifts from the Clayton Historical Association and the Smith-Bryan Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution.

For more information, call 919-934-2836 or email heritagecenter@johnstonnc.com.