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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Unique Events and Festivals in Johnston County in 2022

Smithfield, NC (January 5th, 2022) – When planning excursions around festivals that happen annually in the south, keep Johnston County’s towns in mind. Johnston County is conveniently located where I-95, I-40, and Highway 70 come together just 30 minutes east of Raleigh, in the center of North Carolina. It is a fun and affordable destination with long-standing, unique events throughout the year. If you have any interest in learning about any of the events listed below, please contact the Johnston County Visitors Bureau or visit our [Press Page](#). A link to hi-res photos of these events can be found [here](#). *Also, while these events and dates are currently set, and most take place outside, each event is subject to changes or cancellation as the landscape of the on-going pandemic shifts in 2022.*

Black History Month: February 24 – Activities and events are held around the county during the month. Among them, the Johnston County Heritage Commission's Black History Committee is honoring African American health care professionals on the 24th at 6:30pm at the Reginald Ennis Pavilion in Smithfield. Among those honored will be Mrs. Lucille Raiford Jones of New York, one of the first black nurses at Johnston Memorial Hospital when it opened in 1951.

Stepping Back in Time Series: One Saturday a Month – Visit the Tobacco Farm Life Museum in Kenly for demonstrations and displays of traditional arts, crafts, and trades. The 2022 series includes soap making, quilting, tobacco tying and stringing, and more. See the schedule [here](#).

Live @ the Rudy: Scheduled Throughout the Year – The Rudy Theatre offers four unique, seasonal, family-friendly shows with music, comedy, and more. The March and April show is the Easter Jubilee, May through June is the Summer Jubilee, August through October is the Classic Country Jubilee, and finally the anticipated Christmas Jubilee in November and December.

Bentonville Battlefield Anniversary: March 19 – Bentonville commemorates the anniversary of the battle the third weekend in March each year, with the large reenactments held every five years. The 157th anniversary commemoration of the battle, “Peace to the Gallant Dead”, will include living history demonstrations throughout the day and a night-time luminary display honoring the over 4,000 casualties of the battle.

PDRA East Coast Nationals: April 7-9 – The Professional Drag Racers Association (PDRA) kicks off the 2022 season at GALOT Motorsports Park in Benson, North Carolina with the PDRA East Coast Nationals.

Classic Antique Power Farm Heritage Days: April 8-9 – Step back in time and experience a variety of classic antique tractors at the Benson Chamber Park. The event will include tractor games, antiques tractors & farm equipment demonstrations, craft vendors, food vendors, corn hole tournament, free live entertainment, bouncy houses, pedal tractor raffle, and a farm equipment auction.

Bentonville in Bloom: April 23 – This event will educate visitors on the natural resources of the battlefield, and encourage visitors to enjoy the walking trail system throughout Bentonville.

Beach Fest: April 30 – This event held at The Farm Entertainment Venue in Selma celebrates a unique regional musical genre. This year will be the 9th annual Beach Fest, featuring Jim Quick & Coastline, The Embers, and Band of Oz. Tickets info will be on thefarmnc.com when they go on sale.

Ham & Yam Festival: May 7 – The annual Ham & Yam Festival is teaming with ham biscuits, barbeque pork, sweet potatoes, and more. There will be arts, kid's activities, live entertainment, and the popular "What's That Yam Thing?" art contest.

East Coast Truckers Jamboree: May 12-14 – A three day truck and car show, featuring big rigs and muscle cars. The event also boasts live music, games, and an impressive closing fireworks display. Held at the Kenly 95 Petro travel center.

Champions Tour Tractor Pull: June 3-5 – Come see the U.S.'s premiere tractor pulling series, the popular Lucas Oil Pro Pulling League, which tours the country showcasing the most extreme vehicles and the most talented pulling drivers in the world. This event at GALOT Motorsports park will display six classes of the nation's top pullers.

301 Endless Yard Sale: June 17-18 – Johnston County and its towns along US 301 will host the tenth "Endless Yard Sale" which takes place annually the third weekend of June. The communities will join together with deals, antiques, collectibles, and more along a 100-mile stretch of highway between Roanoke Rapids and Dunn, NC.

State Singing Convention: June 24-26 – The oldest Southern gospel convention in the nation happens at the Singing Grove in Benson and celebrates its 101th anniversary in 2022. It includes three days of gospel music competition including amateur duets, trios, quartets, choirs, and family groups.

Heavy Thunder: August 20 – This is Bentonville's annual summer artillery program, which normally involves several different types of cannon firing demonstrations throughout the day.

Four Oaks Acorn Festival: September 10 – a great family fun event held in the downtown area each year, including children's activities, live entertainment, vendor fair, antique car and tractor show, barbecue competition, and more.

Life on Campaign: September 17 – Bentonville hosts many living history events throughout the year, this one focuses on the role of infantry in the Civil War. Experience demonstrations, camp life displays, and informative talks.

Benson Mule Days: September 22-25 – The fourth Saturday of September has been home to Benson’s Mule Days festival for over 70 years now. This four-day family-fun festival is packed with mule competition events, rodeos, carnival rides, arts and crafts, street dances, and concerts. It also boasts the largest parade in North Carolina!

PDRA Drag Wars: September 29 - October 1 – The Professional Drag Racers Association (PDRA) makes a stop at the world-class GALOT Motorsports Park in Benson, North Carolina for one of their ultimate events of the 2022 season.

Railroad Days Festival: October 7-8 – Join the fun in Downtown Selma as the town celebrates its railroad heritage for a full weekend. The annual event will offer its regular fare, including live entertainment, vendors, food, rides, a parade and 5K run.

Monster Truck Throwdown : October 7-8 – Monster Truck Throwdown at GALOT Motorsports Park is an event for the entire family starting with the Track Party before the show! A show sure to electrify crowds with breath-taking feats and raw horsepower! The combination of speed, style, and destruction will leave families on the edge of their seats!

Ava Gardner Festival: October 7-9 – The Ava Gardner museum is kicking off Ava’s Centennial year with the Ava Gardner Festival. This southern starlet will be celebrating her 100th birthday on Christmas Eve of 2022 and the museum dedicated to preserving her legacy plans to make the festival all about marking the occasion with new exhibits, new collection items, and more.

Sonlight Farms: October – This locally-owned farm offers fall fun for the season with corn mazes, hay rides, giant slides, pumpkins, a climbing wall, peddle carts, farm animals, and more on Saturdays throughout the month.

Clayton Fear Farm: October – Known all over the state as a regional “scream park” this haunted attraction offers over 10 unique scary experiences with one admission. Open multiple nights a week through the month of October. Not for the faint of heart!

Historic Downtown Smithfield Ghost Walk: October 27– Small groups will be guided through the cemetery where costumed reenactors will tell stories about famous (and perhaps infamous) local persons buried there. Previous featured ghosts include Percy Flowers, Ava Gardner, and Governor Gabriel Johnston.

Clayton Harvest Festival: October 27-29 – With roots dating back to 1951, the Clayton Harvest Festival is one of the largest festivals in Johnston County. It includes a midway with fair rides, games, and food, Clayton’s largest vendor fair, Squealin’ on the Square barbecue contest, a classic car show, tractor show, and bike show, as well as local performances.

Bentonville Fall Festival: November 5 – Historic demonstrations, old-time games, period music, and food trucks as you learn about Bentonville, the Harper House, and the history of the battle and the land.

Meadow Lights: November and December – The largest and oldest Christmas light display in eastern, NC. Family owned and operated, started more than 40 years ago, enjoy lights on over 30 acres and with a train ride through 10+ acres.

Lights on the Neuse: November and December – Boyette’s Farm becomes a winter wonderland. View Christmas lights by hayride, visit with Santa in the 3D Christmas Barn, then stand by the fire to warm up and roast marshmallows to make s’mores.

Christmas Lights on the Farm: November and December – One of JoCo’s newer light displays but a local favorite already. Enjoy a hayride through Christmas Town to the Field of Lights display; visit Santa and his friends, plus music and concessions.

Bentonville Christmas Open House: December 3 – Daytime historic Christmas demos and evening candlelight tours of the Harper House, complete with Christmas caroling, and period refreshments.

Drive Through Christmas Village: December – Enjoy outdoor holiday decorations and lights in a rustic, historic setting from the comfort of your own vehicle. The Tobacco Farm Life Museum works to build each display bigger and better every year; hot chocolate and other refreshments are also available.

The Johnston County Visitors Bureau is the official destination marketing organization for the entire county. For more information, contact Ashby Brame, abrame@johnstoncounty.org or call 919-989-8687, or visit the Johnston County Visitors Bureau website at www.johnstoncountync.org. For a current listing of events in Johnston County throughout the year visit www.johnstoncountync.org/events.

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Photo Caption: A cannon at rest on the Bentonville Battlefield State Historic Site.