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Warwick gets ready for Grits festival

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WARWICK — Warwick and the Lake Blackshear Business Organization are gearing up for their 11th annual National Grits Festival Saturday, April 12.

Last year's festival gained statewide attention when various scenes from the event were repeatedly broadcast on Georgia Public Broadcasting's "Georgia Traveler." That means the small community in Worth County is preparing for more visitors than ever for this year's festival.

The day begins with a country breakfast featuring Stripling's homemade sausage, Quaker Grits and all the fixings from 7:30 to 10 a.m. at the Grits Station in the downtown area. Organizers are asking for a $5 donation per plate.

Arts and crafts booths and food vendors open for business at 9 a.m. This is also the time for signing up for the grits eating and corn shelling contests and turning in dishes for the grits cookoff at the civic center.

There is no entry fee for any of these competitions, and cash prizes will be awarded.

Judging for the cookoff starts at 10 a.m., and eating events get going at the same time.

Midday ceremonies are slated for 12 noon at the gazebo. The Rev. Joe Hoskins will deliver the invocation, Michael McDaniel will sing the Grits Song and Jacob Anglon will present "God Bless the USA."

Immediately after the ceremony, the parade featuring the 2008 Grits Queens will begin. This year's queens are Miss Grits Festival Maria Wilson; Junior Miss Destiny Allen; Teen Miss Makayla Lindsey; Little Miss Meredith Culpepper; Teeny Miss Karley Barnes; Toddler Miss Madison Tucker; Tiny Miss Madison Allen and the overall People's Choice winner Taylar Jackson.

Cookoff winners will be announced at 1 p.m., then everyone is invited to roll in the grits pit and see who can hold the most grits on him or her after a timed dip for cash prizes.

In addition to Quaker Grits, corporate sponsors this year include Planters First Bank and Plant Telecommunications.

Organizers promise a fun-filled day. More information about the event is available at the website www.gritsfest.com or by calling Willie Ragan at 229-869-3293.

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