

BENSON, N.C. — The small town of Benson has a population of around 3,500 but will swell to approximately 30,000 this September 20-23, 2018 for the 69th Annual Benson Mule Days Celebration. A blanket of excitement covers the area as visitors converge on the downtown area and countryside, bringing horses, mules, wagons, campers and unusual equine contraptions to settle down for a four-day celebration.

Wednesday and Thursday campers settle in as they prepare to attend the concert which will be held on Thursday night at 6:00 PM in the Benson Singing Grove on Main Street. This year's band is Nashville star Ronnie McDowell. There is no charge for admission. Friday, visitors can enjoy many events including the "Mule Competitions" held in the Chamber Park and Arena. They will see mule coon jumping, a mule race, Best of Show and many other events. From these competitors the "Grand Champion" is chosen and will be in the Benson Mule Days parade on Saturday. If you haven't seen a mule competition this is a "must see" for the whole family.

Main Street will be alive with entertainment on Friday from 12:00 Noon – until 8:00. New this year are tours of the last standing mule stable in Benson during the hours of 2:00 – 5:00 PM on Friday and Saturday. You will also be able to take a tour of historic Benson in a horse-drawn wagon. Also new this year is the first Hispanic Heritage Day at the Carnival. The band will be La Tropa de Tierra Caliente plus there will be dancers and vendors. There is no charge except for the carnival rides and vendors.

Double Creek Pro Rodeo will once again present a SRA sponsored rodeo on Friday and Saturday evenings and Sunday afternoon. Music rodeo pre-shows will be at 6:00 on Friday and Saturday and the rodeo begins at 7:30. Come early to visit the vendors and enjoy the music. After the rodeo on Friday and Saturday, you can shake a leg at the Mule Day Dance. Friday night's Band is Jonathan Parker and Saturday's is Reno Station.

Saturday is a big day at Benson Mule Days as thousands of spectators line Main Street to observe one of the biggest parades in North Carolina. Bands, floats, Shriner units, classic cars, antique tractors, unique entries, beauty queens, and hundreds of horses, mules, buggies, wagons and more make their way through Downtown Benson beginning at 10:00 AM. Following the parade visitors can make their way to the Singing Grove Park where a Bluegrass show is being presented.

There is a lot to do during Benson Mule Days and it is a great time to stroll the beautiful town of Benson. For a complete schedule of this 69-year-old event which honors the farmer's best friend, the mule, call (919) 894-3825 or e-mail Loretta@benson-chamber.com. Take time to visit the web site, www.bensonmuledays.com.

Additional assets available online:

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