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Piney Run Apple Festival adds new attractions

By Carrie Ann Knauer, Times Staff Writer

Wednesday, September 26, 2007

While apples are still the focus of the Piney Run Apple Festival this Saturday, some new attractions, including a demonstration by a sled dog team, are giving the event some new pizzazz.

Park naturalist Kelly Vogelpohl said the Baltimore-based Maryland Sled Dog Adventures team contacted her because they were interested in taking part. Vogelpohl said the team is new and trying to raise awareness, which is why they wanted to come to Carroll.

While many people think sled dogs can only perform in the snow, the team assured Vogelpohl dogs would be able to give rides using their off-season sled, which has wheels.

The festival will also feature a children's maze mowed into the wildflower meadow.

Corn mazes have become popular in the region, and since the park doesn't have a cornfield, it decided to use its meadow as a substitute, Vogelpohl said.

Volunteers at the nature center will be busy preparing for the festival Thursday, trying to make 400 apple dumplings, said Joanne Neil, a volunteer coordinator of baking. On Friday, volunteers will attempt to make 90 apple pies as well, she said.

The dumpling and pie sales are a traditional element of the festival, Neil said. She has been coordinating baking since the first apple festival more than 20 years ago.

"The actual working together on the dumplings and pies is a fun time," Neil said. "People enjoy the social time and the feeling that they are doing something old-fashioned."

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Neil said she's hoping some last minute volunteers can make it Thursday and Friday in order to pull it all off. She said she thinks it will require a dozen volunteers each day in order to meet their goal.

In addition to apples and apple baked goods, the festival will also have an open hearth cooking demonstration, a corn-shelling activity, bee keeping demonstrations and cider press demonstrations.

Other fall activities include wagon rides, scarecrow stuffing and pumpkin painting, Vogelpohl said.

Proceeds from the apple festival go to the Piney Run Conservation and Recreation Council, Vogelpohl said. The group helps buy items for the park that may not make it into its annual budget, Vogelpohl said.

Reach staff writer Carrie Ann Knauer at 410-857-7874 or carrie.knauer@carrollcountytimes.com.

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