



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
MONDAY, SEPT. 19, 2022**

**CONTACT:** *Andrea Ashby, director  
N.C. State Press Office  
919-70-3004; [andrea.ashby@ncagr.gov](mailto:andrea.ashby@ncagr.gov)*

## **New opening time, new parking and entrance options and Home Chef Challenge among changes for N.C. State Fair**

RALEIGH – With Oct. 13-23 just around the corner, the N.C. State Fair is busy gearing up to welcome new grounds entertainment, new competitions and a new special event at the NC Public House. Fairgoers may also notice the addition of a new entry gate off Youth Center Road, a new parking lot option and additional ticket buying kiosks near the gates.

“We’re always evaluating our entertainment lineup and our operations to give fairgoers new things to look forward to each year while also improving their overall experience,” said fair manager Kent Yelverton. “This year the gates will open at 9 a.m. except for a noon opening on Oct. 13. The 9 a.m. start aligns with the opening of the exhibition halls, so fairgoers can dive right into some of the fair offerings as soon as they enter the gates.”

### **New parking lot and new entry gate**

A new parking option this year is the recently developed Cardinal lot, a gravel lot at Hwy. 54/Chapel Hill Road, that offers fairgoers free shuttle service to a newly opened Gate 7 on the West side of the fairgrounds. The Cardinal lot adds to the existing park-and-ride option at the Dogwood lot near the intersection of Reedy Creek Road and Edwards Mill Road. Guests parking in the Dogwood lot are dropped off near Gate 9.

“Gate 7 brings fairgoers onto the grounds near the giant talking Smokey Bear and the N.C. Forest Service and Soil and Water Conservation exhibits. Adding a gate will help open up a developing part of the fairgrounds and provide ease of access for those parking in the Cardinal lot,” Yelverton said.

### **Updated special cooking competitions and entry categories**

The Home Chef Challenge features a different special cooking contest every day, with bragging rights and prizes up for grabs for winners. The challenge has created some social media buzz with categories including loaded nachos, ultimate brownies, spirited pies, quirky cobbler, a make-ahead breakfast, a bacontastic fair food,

chili, grain bowls, sirloin salad and chicken casserole. If you think you have a winning recipe, you have until Oct. 3 to register to compete. The full lineup is:

- Oct. 13 - 4 p.m.: Loaded Nachos Challenge presented by NC State Basketball's Primetime with the Pack
- Oct. 14, 10 a.m.: Brownie Showdown presented by Humana
- Oct. 15, 10 a.m.: Spirited Pie Challenge presented by the Distillers Association of North Carolina
- Oct. 16, 2 p.m.: Great Bowls of Fire Chili Cook-Off presented by Carolina Cooker
- Oct. 17, 10 a.m.: Morning Mayhem Buster: Make-Ahead Breakfast Challenge presented by Superior Sleep Experience
- Oct. 18, 11 a.m.: Brain Food Healthy Grain Bowl Challenge presented by Wegmans
- Oct. 19, 10 a.m. Tip Top Sirloin Salad Challenge
- Oct. 20, 10 a.m.: Bacontastic Fair Food Challenge with junior and adult divisions presented by the NC Pork Council
- Oct. 21, 10 a.m.: Not Your Mama's Chicken Casserole Challenge presented by House of Raeford
- Oct. 22, 10 a.m.: Duke Cancer Care in Wake County Celebrates Cancer Warriors Challenge presented by Duke Raleigh Hospital
- Oct. 23, 10 a.m.: Quirky Cobbler Challenge

And speaking of competitions, ink pen decorated seashells and artwork inspired floral arrangements are two new categories offered this year. The popular decorated Christmas tree category returns this year following its 2021 debut and will be displayed in the north lobby of Dorton Arena as you enter the Got to Be NC Agriculture Pavilion. Competition entries will be on display in the Commercial, Education and Scott buildings as well as in the Agri Supply Exposition Center. You can find out more at [www.ncstatefair.org](http://www.ncstatefair.org) by clicking on the competitions tab.

### **New grounds entertainment**

Straw sculptor Brian Sobaski was set to make his State Fair debut in 2021, but thankfully that plan was just delayed a year and not denied. You never know where inspiration will carry him. Sobaski has created all manner of whimsical creatures including bears, giraffes, bulls, bunnies, pirates and birds. See Sobaski's giant-sized straw creations take shape outside the Agri Supply Exposition Center daily.

Also new is the Hog Diggity Dogs & More show featuring hogs and dogs in a high-energy show near Gate 10. Dogs of all sizes perform tricks and showcase their agility...and when was the last time you saw a pig taking a ride down a slide?

Finally, new performer Ember Fire Arts will put on two shows nightly at 9 and 10 p.m. in Heritage Circle. Be drawn into the mesmerizing show as the performer dances around flaming hoops, twirls and balances flaming batons and breathes fire into the night air.

### **New rides**

Midway provide Powers Great American Midways will bring five new rides to the N.C. State Fair. AirMaxx should get thrill seekers' hearts pumping as it spins two armloads of eight riders up, down and around. Other new thrilling spectacular rides include Wave Swinger 2, Techno Jump and WipeOut. The new Crazy Cabs ride is geared for the kiddies, with bright yellow colored mini taxi cabs spinning and twirling on a tilted track.

### **New educational opportunities**

■ **At the NC Public House Friday, Oct. 14**

Marking its second year located in the South Lobby of Dorton Arena, the NC Public House returns with dozens of breweries, wineries, cideries, and craft soda makers from across North Carolina for fairgoers 21 and up to sample. Craft beer aficionados will want to plan to attend Friday, Oct. 14, from 5 to 8 p.m., for NC Beer Night at the Fair. Offerings include an "Ask a Brewer" question-and-answer session and a brewing equipment demonstration provided by Atlantic Brew Supply. Reps from Wake Tech's brewing education program and Raleigh's local homebrew club CARBOY will be on hand.

■ **New N.C. Forest Service Educational Programming**

The N.C. Forest Service has a new line-up of educational opportunities in the State Fair Conservation Forest, just up the hill from Heritage Circle, you'll find an all new "campfire round" on the pond's edge to learn more about one of North Carolina's most valuable resources...its forests.

■ **Heritage Circle Cider House**

Learn about apple cider pressing at the Heritage Circle Cider House in Heritage Circle, led by fifth generation apple farmers from Hendersonville. Bright Branch Farms grows and produces over 100 acres of apples and, also presses fresh cider at the farm. Come see cider pressing demonstrations daily at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and try a cup of farm fresh cider.

The North Carolina State Fair will run Oct. 13-23 at the State Fairgrounds in Raleigh. The fair offers an experience unique to North Carolina for all who attend, and is an unparalleled value with free entertainment, thrilling rides and games, thousands of animals, endless family activities, competitions, vendors and creative deep-fried delights. For more information, visit [www.ncstatefair.org](http://www.ncstatefair.org) or connect on Facebook, Twitter, TikTok and Instagram @ncstatefair.