



**CHOWING DOWN** on steamed blue crabs and corn on the cob are Luke Woodbury and Sandra White, both of Lenoir. Her assessment? "It's wonderful!"

BEACON FILE PHOTO

# 'Crabby' Festival Is Big Draw For Waterfront Town

BY SUSAN USHER

**H**ow can a town of just 4,000 residents draw more than 30,000 visitors to its waterfront each spring?

Just ask the Southeastern Travel and Tourism Society, which last year designated the Blue Crab Festival at Little River, S.C., one of the top 20 events in the Southeast.

The society described the event as "the festival jewel in the crown of the Grand Strand area."

Festival-goers won't use all the fancy adjectives, but their sentiments are the same. They like the entertainment, the arts and crafts, the food, and just as important, its setting beneath gnarled oaks, tempered by the ocean breeze.

For two days each May this picturesque waterfront community hums with pleasure, as visitors swarm its more than 100 booths of some of the Southeast's finest arts and crafts, sample an array of

tempting foods. When it's time to take a break from shopping, they sit back and relax to live entertainment that typically includes a popular mix of local beach, gospel, folk, bluegrass and country music-makers. The main stage is set in the hub

*To find the Blue Crab Festival, follow U.S. 17 south to the stoplight at Little River, S.C.*

of the festival, overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway. A second stage rests in the middle of a field, with picnic tables at one side. There's plenty of room left for lawn chairs, blankets and picnicking paraphernalia.

This festival saluting one of the

East Coast's most popular crustaceans is now in its 11th season, scheduled the weekend after Mother's Day. Each year its has grown, both in the extent of its offerings and the size of the crowd it draws. Special activities and attractions for children are just one of the improvements added over the years; more places to sit (to eat, or simply rest) is another.

To find the Blue Crab Festival, follow U.S. 17 south to the stoplight at Little River, S.C. Turn left to reach festival events, which are held along the waterfront. Courtesy parking and a trolley bus shuttle are available at several points along the U.S. 17 business district, since parking is very limited near the waterfront.

Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children 6 and older. Younger children are admitted for free.

As a gesture of appreciation, and to encourage participation by local residents, half-price tickets are traditionally available for purchase at the Little River Chamber of Commerce office and at all Little River banks starting May 1.

More information on the festival is available from the chamber, 1-803-249-6604.

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