

Grand opening slated for new equestrian and ag center in Williamston this weekend

WILLIAMSTON — Horses, bulls and country music legends are all slated to appear in Martin County July 10-12 for the official opening weekend of the Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center.

Public festivities begin Friday, July 10 at 3 p.m. with a parade of North Carolina's horse breeds, a demonstration from the Southern States Percheron Hitch Team, a visit from Miss North Carolina and other opening ceremony activities.

"This is one of the finest facilities in America and I would personally like to invite everyone to join us for the opening celebration," said North Carolina Agriculture Commissioner Jim Graham. "We have three evenings of activities planned to showcase this new facility."

On Friday, the Second Annual Martin County Red Cross Bull Bash will begin at 8 p.m. The professional rodeo will feature the South's top riders battling some of the toughest bulls on the circuit. The arena will fill up Saturday, July 11 at 8 p.m. for a second rodeo performance.

Advance tickets are \$10 for adults, \$6 for children ages six to 12, and free for children under five. Tickets at the door are \$12 for adults, \$8 for children ages six to 12, and free for children under five. All proceeds will benefit the Martin County Red Cross.

Opening weekend activities climax Sunday evening, July 12, at 6 p.m., when country music legends Doug Stone and Aaron Tippin take the stage in the new coliseum. The concert is being sponsored by WRNS-95.1 FM, Dixie 105.7, WERO

93.3 FM, and Ron Ayers Motorsports. Advance concert tickets are \$22.50 for reserved seats and \$17.50 for general admission. Tickets will be \$22.50 at the door.

Advance tickets for the rodeos and the concert are available at all Eastern N.C. Trademart and Red Apple stores, TexasStyle western store in Greenville and the Corey True Value Home Center in Williamston. The grand opening ceremony and parade are free.

Already described as one of the best equestrian complexes east of the Mississippi, the new facility features a 106,000 square-foot coliseum and show arena with 2,400 permanent seats, along with four modern 7,500 square-foot horse stables capable of housing 292 horses. Construction has started on

phase two of the center, which will include a 16,800 square-foot facility multi-purpose building, additional parking and a maintenance facility.

Members of the N.C. General Assembly are expected to attend, along with officials from the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Martin County Board of Commissioners, the Martin County Chamber of Commerce, the Martin County Travel and Tourism Authority, the Martin County Economic Development Office, the N.C. Northeast Economic Development Partnership, the Martin County Committee of 100 and the Eastern N.C. Chamber of Commerce.

For more information, contact the Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agriculture Center at (919) 792-5802.



ALL IN A HARD DAY'S WORK

While aboard the Phideaux charter boat on July 4th, two Chowan County residents hauled in a nice catch from the Atlantic Ocean. Wade Nixon, left, landed a 66-pound citation wahoo and Chris Brabble took aboard a 52-pound tuna during the trip. The Phideaux's captain is Jamie Reibel.

Legislators seek to improve waterfront communities

Republican lawmakers want to set aside \$30,000 for studies aimed at increasing jobs along the state's coast

Legislators from eastern North Carolina have introduced legislation aimed at creating hundreds of new jobs in tourism by aiding the development of their region's dozens of historic waterfront towns.

The legislation, introduced in the short session of the NC House and Senate, would earmark up to \$30,000 in funds appropriated to the Northeastern and Southeastern Economic Partnerships for planning and feasibility studies in the towns which qualify.

Authors of the bill are Reps. Sandy Hardy, R-Beaufort, and Jean Preston, a Carteret Re-

publican, and Sen. Patrick J. Balantine, a Wilmington Republican. Joining them in Raleigh recently at a press conference to push the bill was a delegation from northeastern North Carolina, led by Washington County Republican Chairman Eddie Browning of Plymouth, and Dare County Republican Chairman George A. Embry of Nags Head, the Republican candidate for the 86th NC House seat.

"This legislation will give some of the most beautiful, but economically depressed counties in the state an opportunity to take advantage of their assets for tourism development," said Hardy.

Embry pointed out that the state's Outer Banks and Crystal Coast beaches provide thousands of good tourism jobs and many more would come out of "well-planned development of our hundreds of miles of waterfront along our region's



N.C. House Speaker Harold Brubaker is presented with legislation by eastern North Carolina lawmakers and N.C. House candidate George Embry. From left are: Brubaker, Reps. Sandy Hardy, R-Beaufort, and Jean Preston, R-Carteret, Embry, and state Sen. Patrick J. Balantine, a Wilmington Republican.

beautiful sounds." "Tourism is good for North Carolina and we want to make it even better," he said. "Not only will development of our waterfront communities help

tourism, it will enhance our region's growing popularity for retirement homes, the older folks with money in their pockets who generate even more year-round jobs."

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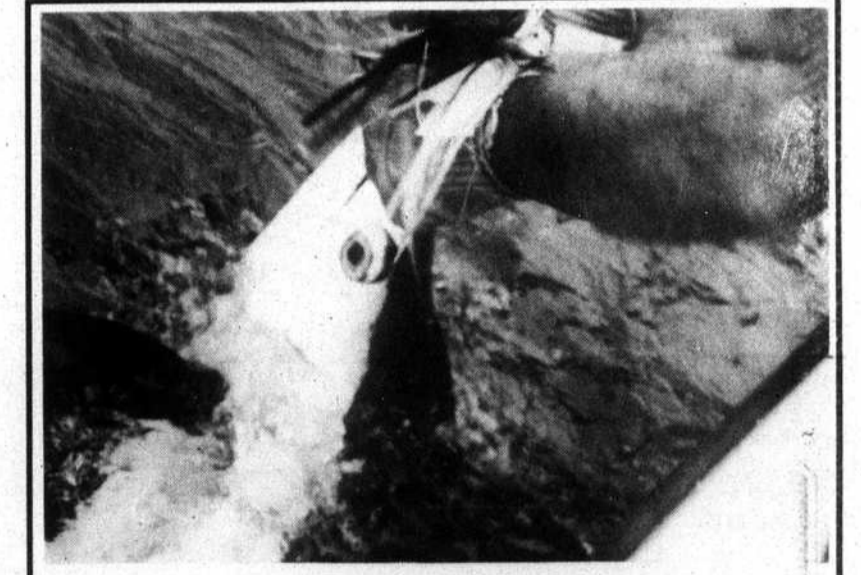
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