

Jay Swicegood, Lamar Adams, Kaye Barker and Cliff Copeland are among those organizing the District 5 Little league All-Star Tournament that will held at Fisher Field in Edenton starting Monday. (Staff photo by Sean Jackson)

District 5 Little League All-Stars will hold tournament starting on Monday

BY SEAN JACKSON Staff Writer

Local officials are hoping next week's District 5 11-12 year-old Little League baseball tournament will be a shining

If the enthusiasm shown by parents, fans and players during the Edenton-Chowan Recreation Department's regular season is any indication, the tournament should go off just

"We feel we have a good group of kids here," said Jay Swicegood, one of three coaches for Edenton's 11-12 year-old team.

Many members of the Edenton squad, Swicegood, were on a 10-yearold team that captured the District 5 title in 1996.

The games begin Monday at 6 p.m. when Edenton squares off with Perquimans, with the title game set for Friday night. A double-elimination format will be used in the nine-team

tournament. With major renovations to Fisher Field completed, teams from Perquimans, Roberson-Bear Grass, Chocowinity, Belhaven and Jamesville will ity.

"There has been more work in fields in Little League complexes in the

Manicured grasses in the infields and outfields at the two fields, new landscaping and sound systems, and a renovated concession stand should all serve the tournament well.

"The entire community has supported the renovations to Fisher Field," said parks and recreation director Lamar Adams. "The businesses, the parents, everyone, it seems, have pitched in to make this one of the finest Little League ballparks around."

Adams also mentioned local businesses that purchased signs on the outfield fences as a visible reminder of community

"I don't think we've ever hosted a Little League tournament in Edenton because we didn't have the facilities," said Swicegood, who will be joined in the Edenton dugout by fellow coaches Mike Dowd and Ted Bass.

County Manager Cliff Copeland agreed that full support from the community ville, Williamston, Plymouth, helped revitalize Fisher Field League teams. into a top-notch baseball facil-

on the baseball fields in Edenton and Chowan in the past year than in the history of the town and the county," he said.

Starting Saturday morning, the Little League players will gather for a "Hit, Throw and Run" contest at Fisher Field. Trophies will be awarded to the team that accumulates the most points and to individual winners. Saturday's events will include a home run derby, and will finish up with a hot dog cookout at 4:30 p.m.

"It's a chance for the kids to get together on a social level as well as a competitive level," said Copeland.

Having worked with Adams, Swicegood, Carroll Evans, and Carroll Jones to put the tournament together, Kaye Barker said opening night should be a culmination of hard work and fun for everyone.

"The community support has been wonderful," Barker said, noting that the Hoke Roberson Memorial Sportsmanship Trophy will be awarded for the first time this year to one of the recreation department's Little

Sound

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The races will start at the Trestle House Inn Creek, wind out into the Albemarle Sound, and cross the Chowan River to the finish line at Edenton Bay., The trip is roughly 4 to 4.5 miles long, said Bogus. All participants in the races will receive a free T-shirt.

Other featured events are scheduled to include paddlepowered watercraft demonstrations, local and regional arts and crafts displays, interpretive canoe outings, raffles, educational booths manned by wildlife agencies, family-oriented activities, face painting, food and live musical entertainment.

"Rebecca and the Hightones, who perform annually at the Eno (River) Festival (in Duham) will perform on the waterfront stage on Saturday afternoon," Bogus said. The band, he said, is widely known for its swing music, and will be performing for free.

Sunday's events will take place at Bennett's Millpond. Albemarle Recreation Center will display its collection of "old timey" agricultural equipment, and canoeing will return on the 200-acre millpond. There will also be a pig-picking on Sunday, said Bogus.

As tourism moves to the forefront of the state's economic development, tapping into Chowan's natural and cultural resources is essential to developing a larger range of sights and events for tourists. Ecotourism, said Bogus, incorporates heritage tourism, and other traditional forms of sightseeing and vacationing.

"The natural and cultural resources of Edenton and Chowan County are wonderful," he said, noting that the Trestle House books a number of lodgers in the fall months who simply come to Chowan just for the bird-watching, local scenery, and overall abundance of wildlife and water in this area. "We need a lot of local support for the festival. After losing the Crape Myrtle Festival, we are in need of festivals in Edenton. We want to make this an annual event. We want this thing to grow to where all of South Broad Street is closed to traffic as people walk down to the waterfront to enjoy the festi-

A steering committee is currently "smoothing out the rough spots" and polishing final details for the festival, he said. That committee includes: Sue Clark, Chowan Arts Council Director; Bob Harrell, Albemarle Recreation Center Director; Chip Campbell, a Raleigh-based canoe and kayak out-fitter; Rodney Johnson with the Chowan Soil & Water Conservation District: Tom Potter with the N.C. Department of Health and Natural Resources; Jack Thigpen, a specialist with Sea Grant Coastal Recreation

& Tourism Office; and Bogus. Proceeds from the event will go to environmental agencies, businesses and projects seeking to promote eco-tourism in northeast North Carolina.

"This is a non-profit event," he said. "We've had a lot of financial support already from many local businesses. I think this thing is going to be hig, be a lot of fun for everybody. But, with this being the first-ever festival, we still need business donations. Any help we can get with this will make the festival that much better."

Donors will be recognized in three groups: Stewardship (a donation of \$500 or more), Conservationist (\$250-\$499), and Contributing (\$1-\$249). Vendors can rent space for \$25.



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