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Thousands converge at annual festival

BY ERIN WILTGEN
Staff Writer

Bright sunlight accompanied the brightly colored streets of Thomasville this Everybody's Day, giving festive a rare chance to visit the multiple craft, food and vendor stands lining Main Street and neighboring alleyways without fear of a downpour.

From crowds oozing and ah-hing at the King BMX Stunt Show to pink-haired children trailing two or three balloons, those who attended the 102nd rendition of North Carolina's oldest festival actually found themselves warding off the heat with cardboard fans rather than running from the rain. And the good weather might have drawn more people than usual. Though Dough Croft, president of the Thomasville Area Chamber of Commerce, said he didn't have exact numbers, he did admit the streets seemed a bit more packed.

"It was definitely bigger than last year, in the tens of thousands," Croft said. "It was a great crowd, a great day. We love the idea that so many people can come together in one place."

Amidst the typical craft vendors, food-sellers, informational booths and musical performances, Everybody's Day extended to the Chair City's new PACE amphitheater, featuring concerts such as City Manager Kelly Craver's Street Party Band.

The name says it all — given everything the festival has to offer, it seems there's something for everyone. Susan Barr, of Thomasville, says she not only enjoys the food and free hand-outs, she also likes getting involved in area events.

"It just seems like the right thing to do, to come out and support our community," she said.

Everybody's Day boasted about 130 vendors this year in addition to rides and entertainment. The latter two, combined with a few face-painting stands, created a fun environment for families with young children to spend the day. David Kennedy, of Thomasville, brought his



Thousands of people descended on Thomasville Saturday for the annual Everybody's Day festival.

TIMES PHOTOS/ELIOT DUKE/LISA WILSON

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granddaughter to the festival, and says he has done so for the past few years.

"I come because of my little grandbaby," he said. "It's a good family atmosphere."

That wholesome, welcoming vibe gathered people of all ages, from infant to elderly. Lee Spencer, of Thomasville, says he loves that collection of individuals. His favorite thing about

the festival, he says, is watching the crowd and visiting with friends and neighbors.

"It's a fun day, and everyone's having a good time," Spencer said. "Thomasville's a fun-loving place."

An event designed to welcome the fall — though Saturday's weather may have disagreed — Everybody's Day gathers so

many people together not because of any one particular feature but because of its intrinsic place in Chair City life.

"There are lots of fall festivals around the state," Croft said. "It kind of kicks off the fall season. It's such a local institution and part of the fabric of the Thomasville community. It all sort of fits together."

County looks to raise SAT participation

BY ELIOT DUKE
Staff Writer

Whenever Davidson County students take the SAT they usually perform very well. The problem, however, is not enough of them are taking the test, and the Davidson County Schools (DCS) system is hoping to change that.

Recently released scores from DCS show that area students are right on par with the rest of the state when it comes to the SAT, averaging a 1485, which is a combination of reading, math and writing. Compared to surrounding school districts, Davidson County holds the second highest average

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Grant keeps TMS kids on the run

BY ELIOT DUKE
Staff Writer

In the movie "Forrest Gump," Tom Hanks' character develops a love for running as a child that carries him through his adult life.

Students at Thomasville Middle School are getting an opportunity to explore the world of running thanks to a grant that promotes healthy, active lifestyles through a sport that doesn't require a ball, referee or field, just a pair of shoes and the willingness to get up and do it.

TMS recently received a \$2,000 grant through ING

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New East principal making smooth transition

BY ERIN WILTGEN
Staff Writer

For Billy R. Hunt Jr., a love of teaching almost came as genetically as his hair or eye color.

Hunt's father — a one-time educator at West Davidson High School — retired after 35 years of teaching and still can't get the bug out of his system. The elder Hunt still teaches two classes at Davidson County Community College.

Hunt, in a way, has followed in his father's footsteps, beginning his 21st year in education this fall as the new principal of East Davidson High School.

"I guess you could say I had

teaching in my blood growing up," Hunt said, laughing. "I've just always enjoyed being around people, especially being around high school kids. It's just something I've wanted to do."

Hunt began his career in education in 1990 at Lexington Senior High School, where he put in 13 years teaching business and coaching football and baseball. He moved to South Davidson High School in 2003 where he served as assistant principal for five years and principal for two.

On July 1, Hunt replaced Cathi Smith, who retired after 11 years as East Davidson principal and 34 years in education.

"It's been just great," Hunt said. "It's been a really smooth transition for me, coming from South Davidson. The students here, the community and the teachers have been wonderful."

Smith actually helped ease the change, both for Hunt and for the school, spending time with the new principal over the summer to show him the ropes. The extra months before school started gave Hunt some time to adjust to his new surroundings.

"It gives you a little time to get your feet wet and find out a little more about the school and the teachers," he said. "Quite a few teach-

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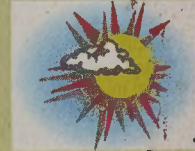


TIMES PHOTO/ERIN WILTGEN
East Davidson Principal Billy Hunt is making a smooth transition from South, with the help of former principal Cathi Smith.

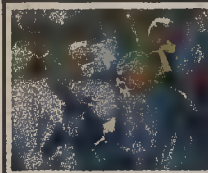
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Today's Weather:



Mostly sunny, 80/59



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