



**City of Eustis**  
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*For Immediate Release –*

**GEORGEFEST 2007 – “A Salute to Freedom”**  
**Eustis’ 105th year of celebrating George Washington’s Birthday**

For 105 years the City of Eustis has been celebrating George Washington’s Birthday with a festival. The Grand Parade is traditional, but this GeorgeFest will be “going where no GeorgeFest has gone before!” New events include a dance party, a concert, a laser light show, Skiff races, Radio Disney and a Gospel Sing. Watch for George Washington to cross Lake Eustis during Saturday’s events! Everyone’s favorite events will return as well, including the Bed Race, Dog Jog, the Grand Parade, the Top Dawg Amateur Dog Contest, the Cherry Pie Eating Contest, the Celebrity Hot Dog Eating Contest and Canoe & Kayak races.

Festival merriment will begin with the carnival opening on Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 PM and will remain open until 11:00 PM each night until Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. On Sunday, February 25<sup>th</sup> the carnival will close at 6:00 PM. Come check out The Wipeout, The Orient Express, The Dizzy Dragon, Crazy Bus, The Typhoon, Merry-Go-Round, kiddy rides, games, caramel apples, cotton candy and so much more!

On both Friday and Saturday night (Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>), Laser Image Pro will present a laser light show with a variety of music, lights and graphics. The finale will consist of “God Bless The USA,” and a bit of the “1812 Overture.” On Friday the laser show will be at 8 PM and on Saturday at 7:45 PM.

Local businesses and area artisans will have booths with products and services available for purchase or information. The food menu includes chili, crepes, roasted nuts, Italian ice, cannolis, tacos, Mexican food, pizza by Cici’s, kettle corn, ice cream treats, corn dogs, Cuban sandwiches, chicken baskets, cheese sticks, red & black beans, Philly cheese steaks, breakfast biscuits, chicken tenders, rib-eye & fish sandwiches, shrimp, crab-cakes & fish baskets and several types of gourmet hot dogs. Water, soft drinks, beer and wine will be available during the festival.

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23rd EVENTS**

The festival officially opens at 5:30 PM. Family fun is available with the carnival, food and arts & crafts booths.

A “Decades Dance Party” is sure to please everyone as DJ Tony Alonzo plays music from the 40’s, 50’s, 60’s, 70’s and up! The dance party will be held from 7 PM – 10 PM under the tent at the Band Shell in Ferran Park on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. Dress up in clothes from your favorite decade or just come in your street clothes. There will be prizes for the best costume. Hors D’oeuvres and beverages will be served, or grab yourself a full meal from one of our excellent food vendors. Tickets for the dance are \$15.00 and can be purchased at the Lake Eustis Area Chamber of Commerce.

## **SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24th EVENTS**

Parade festivities begin at 9:15 AM with the 2nd Annual Bed Race. This will begin at Bayse Janitor Supply at 300 S. Bay St. (along the parade route). Teams of four pushers and a rider will race their beds to the finish line at MacDonald Ave. At 9:30 AM enjoy the Annual Dog Jog, presented by Shamrock Veterinary Clinic as local residents parade, walk and jog their pet pooches. Many teams are in matching attire and the event is great fun to watch. At 10 AM the Grand Parade will wind its way along Bay St., through downtown to Bates Ave. Thousands of spectators line the parade route to cheer for friends and family in the parade and just have a great time. Parade units include floats, decorated vehicles, bands, twirlers, and even a friendly camel! The theme of the parade is "A Salute To Freedom." Many veterans groups will be marching in the parade this year, so let's come out and salute the heroes who have helped to preserve our freedom.

This year the festival is loaded with many events and family fun. After the parade, folks can walk over to the park and grab some lunch in the food midway. Local businesses and craft artists will have booths with products and services available for purchase or information.

At Noon everyone can enjoy the Top Dawg Amateur Dog Games. Enter your favorite canine friend in one of many different categories like "most patriotic costume", "longest tail, "shortest legs," and more. Registration will begin at 11:30 AM for the Noon event.

The New Jersey Speed skiffs were originally wooden racing boats in the 1940's through 1960's. The spirit of those boats has been re-introduced with fiberglass hull replicas using 350 cubic inch Chevrolet inboard engines. These boats go up to 80 MPH! The races will be held at 12:15 PM, 2:15 PM & 4 PM.

The Canoe & Kayak Races will begin at 1 PM and continue during the afternoon from the Ferran Lake front. The event is sponsored by Lake County Canoe & Kayak and Progress Energy. Everyone is welcome to enter and the entry fee is only \$5.00.

Everyone gets messy at the Annual Cherry Pie Eating Contest! The kids have their own contest and then it is the adults vs. the adults! There is no cost to enter and you could come away with the "piggie prize!"

Come and watch local officials, business people and our very own David Caruso (CSI Miami) look-alike compete for who can eat a single hot dog in the fastest time and win the coveted "hot dog hat!" See if Jake Vest can retain his title from 2006!

Radio Disney will be appearing at GeorgeFest for the first time this year. They will have hand-outs, entertainment and games for everyone. They will be here from 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM, so make sure the kids get a chance to visit with them during that time. Radio Disney is appearing courtesy of the Lake County Tourism and Business Relations.

Following the Laser Light Show at 7:45 PM, the Leonard Brothers will give a concert. The Leonard Brothers are a high energy party band that regularly appears at Disney's Pleasure Island, Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville and Las Vegas. The band plays popular cover tunes from various decades, so there will be something for everyone to enjoy! Tickets for seating under the tent at the Band Shell are \$10.00 and are available at the Lake Eustis Area Chamber of Commerce.

## **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25th EVENTS**

All of the booths and food vendors will return on Sunday to feed hungry people. After your church service, stop in at the festival for a great lunch!

The Gospel Sing will begin at 12:30 PM with the Voices in Worship praise group. Then First Baptist Church, Eustis Adult Choir will take the stage. After our guest speaker, popular local Southern Gospel artist Mary Fluharty will perform. United In Praise, a choir consisting of people from area churches, will finish the Gospel Sing with a great concert. People can sit under the tent for a \$2.00 donation (which also provides a chance to win a gift in the button drawing at 4:30 PM) or bring your own lawn chair and enjoy the music!

Jerry Newcombe is the co-author of "George Washington's Sacred Fire," a book about George Washington's faith. Jerry will be speaking at 2 PM at the Band Shell.

The final event of the festival is the annual Button Drawing. The GeorgeFest 2007 buttons will be offered for \$2.00 on Saturday and Sunday at the Chamber booth. Buttons are also available now at the Chamber, Merry Jewelers, our button sponsor, and other downtown merchants. The drawing will be held at 4:45 PM. Each \$2.00 button purchase is another chance to win exciting prizes donated by local merchants and Chamber Members. Grand Prize will be a ring with 43 diamonds from Merry Jewelers, valued at \$895! Other prizes from Merry Jewelers include a ladies gold ring with 19 diamonds, a 43 piece silver plated set with chest, and a men's Bulova watch. Many Chamber members have donated gift baskets, gift certificates for services and restaurants and items from local retailers and vendors. Over 90 gifts will be a part of the drawing. Participants need not be present to win.

The latest 2007 GeorgeFest schedule can be found at:  
<http://www.eustischamber.org/GeorgeFest2007/fullschedule.pdf> For more information, please contact the Lake Eustis Area Chamber of Commerce at (352) 357-3434.

Released by: Richard Hoon, Executive Assistant to the City Manager