

Spring Lake Fall Festival 2024



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Spring Lake celebration



PHIL ATTINGER/STAFF

This year's Spring Lake Fall Festival, under the shade of Pine Breeze Park, brought in 125 vendors, said Phil Gentry, a member of the Board of Supervisors and one of the organizers of the annual event. It's grown tremendously, he said, in the four years since the improvement district celebrated its 50th anniversary.



PHIL ATTINGER/STAFF

Lilly Clark, 12, defends her title as the winning Halloween costume two years running at the annual Spring Lake Fall Festival in Pine Breeze Park. She was there with her brother, behind her dressed as a wounded soldier, and her aunt, who was not competing, but dressed up anyway as 'Poison Ivy.'

Big event started as an anniversary

BY PHIL ATTINGER
Staff Writer

If there's a contest for having the biggest party, Spring Lake Improvement District wants in on it.

The annual Spring Lake Fall Festival last Saturday had reservations for 137 vendors, said Phil Gentry of the Spring Lake Board of Supervisors. About 125 of them showed, he said,

which is a big difference from where the festival was five years ago.

Then, prior to 2021, the festival consisted of just a big family-style barbecue under the trees at Pine Breeze Park. For the 50th anniversary of the district, 2021, they wanted something bigger, Gentry said.

They got it. Four years later, the event has grown to have scores of vendors, food and family

fun, a classic car display and a Halloween costume contest for kids. Lilly Clark, 12, showed up as a vampire to defend her title. She's won it the last two years.

One of the most interesting vendor displays was a paver patio with a fire pit, only it wasn't sending out heat as much as hot tunes from a Bluetooth speaker.

Danny and Alma Baker, whose business

constructs patios and pits for homeowners, said the display itself took just 30 minutes to set up, although the actual thing would take much longer.

Gentry said the District has already set a date for next year, to help everyone get ready. Unless otherwise announced, it will be Oct. 25, 2025, the Saturday before Halloween.







Get ready
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Spring Lake Festival offered something for everyone

By SHARON WEATHERHEAD
CORRESPONDENT

This year's fourth annual Spring Lake Festival at Pine Breeze Park in Sebring was a huge success last Saturday with mild weather, a little breeze and lots of people who made the day special.

Well-known local host, Don Elwell, opened the festival with a hearty welcome to everyone participating and to all those attending the festivities. The national anthem was sung by Nelly Ford, of Sebring. Ford has sung the national anthem at the Tampa Bay Rays games many times.

Adults, kids and dogs browsed the many vendor tents and tables. Many of them were dressed for the Halloween costume contests.

According to Phil Gentry, event coordinator, "We have 128 vendors, seven food trucks, exhibitors, a farmers' market, games, contests, youth activities and bounce houses. It's our biggest event ever."

Dona Mason, with Craft Room Creations, had a tent full of interesting and colorful items. "I have a little bit of multiple types of crafts. Mostly fancy towels and decorative kitchen towels with toppers, doll clothes, bingo bags and Christmas items and ornaments," she said.

Shana's Creative Impressions, by Shana Scott, offered decorative doormats and colorful hair bows. "This is what I enjoy creating," she said.

Dennis Thieme, with Heartland Pet Rescue, sat for a minute with his friend Gunner, a beautiful Lab mix. "He loves to play frisbee and ball all day long. All our dogs live in a home, and we monitor how they are doing," he said.

In the Crafted by Emily tent, Hayden Piety was pouring paint into small containers for paint kits. He had fun doing it at a recent Children's Museum of the Highlands event and decided to do it again.

Alix Story and Ray Wallace purchased some festive wreaths from Wallace's niece, Tina, with Sebring Signs and Shirts.

"My niece, Tina, is with Sebring Signs and Shirts," he said. Food vendors included Sue Pigs Barbeque, The Chop House, Cuban Sandwiches, German food, and Trinity Church. Sue



Dona Mason with Craft Room Creations shows some of her kitchen towel designs, doll clothes and Christmas ornaments that she creates.



ALL PHOTOS BY SHARON WEATHERHEAD CORRESPONDENT

Ray Wallace and Alix Story purchase some festive wreaths from Wallace's niece, Tina, with Sebring Signs and Shirts at the Spring Lake Festival last Saturday in Sebring.



Attendees at the fourth annual Spring Lake Festival browsing the vendor tents and tables.



Shana Scott with Shana's Creative Impressions shows some of the decorative doormats and colorful hair bows that she makes.



Contestants line up for the dog costume contest.

Pigs sold out of their barbeque just after noon. Trinity Church had some awesome bratwurst sandwiches with sauerkraut. Josh McGhee and Breana Cordero brought their furry friends Stella and Theo to the festival. The dogs were dressed up to participate in the costume contest.

Shades of Green Nursery was offering

a variety of different plants including citrus and tropical fruit trees.

Deputy Jeff Turner and his partner K-9 Hooch visited with kids as well as adults and was enjoying the attention. Hooch is part of the Highlands County Sheriff's Office Blood Hound team. He was born on Cinco de Mayo, May 5, in 2018. "He's a good tracking

dog," said Turner, who is his partner. "He tracks criminals and missing people. Hooch is 6½ and will probably retire when he turns 8. He's had 86 successful tracks."

The fifth annual Spring Lake Festival is already in the planning stage for next fall. They're looking for it to be even greater than this year.



Nelly Ford, a local actor and singer at Highlands Lakeside Theatre in Sebring, sings the national anthem.