

Chatham County Announces 250th Anniversary Celebrations

By Administrator
Wednesday, 24 March 2021 09:02 -

To honor its 250th anniversary, Chatham County will host a series of interactive events for community members throughout the year. The first event, Founding Day, will be held on Saturday, April 10, 2021, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. in downtown Pittsboro. People should follow the balloons from Hanks St. to 204 W. Salisbury St. (St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church) in Pittsboro. This drive-thru event will have nine stations that focus on history and community, with opportunities for individuals and families to share, learn and engage. At the first drive-thru station, participants will be greeted by the Chatham 250 co-chairs – Dr. Carl E. Thompson, Sr., Renee Paschal and Lendy Carias – and will receive the supplies they need to get the birthday party started.

Station Two will feature three reenactors of Chatham County's original founders where attendees will be greeted on their way in.

"The reenactor station will have three reenactors portraying historic people: William Pitt, John Brooks and Lucy Worth Jackson," said the Pittsboro Business Association Membership Chair Cindy Schmidt. "Chatham County was named for William Pitt, the first Earl of Chatham. John Brooks was one of Chatham County's first settlers receiving a 640-acre grant on Tick Creek in 1755. Lastly, Lucy Worth Jackson was the daughter of Jonathan Worth, Reconstruction Governor and War Treasurer of the State, and wife of Joseph John Jackson, an attorney."

Station Three will feature a drive-thru museum gallery where participants can learn about the life and legacy of Chatham County resident Lewis Freeman. This station will be hosted at Hobbs Architects located at 159 W. Salisbury St.

"Lewis Freeman was a most remarkable man to have survived and apparently thrived in Chatham County between 1773 and 1847," said Grim Hobbs, Vice President of Hobbs Architects. "As a free black man, he was able to purchase the freedom of his wife and family members and to acquire significant parcels of land near the center of Pittsboro and in Chatham County. While there is more we'd like to know about Lewis Freeman, all we do know makes his life a Chatham County and American story worth celebrating."

Station Four will feature a "Found It In Pittsboro" activity where community members will be able to find hidden rabbits around downtown Pittsboro from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Five embellished rabbit statues will be hidden on and near Hillsboro St. The first 25 visitors to the Main Street Pittsboro Welcome Center (37 Hillsboro St.) who show a photo of themselves with three of the five statues will receive a \$10 voucher to participating downtown businesses. All

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participants will be entered into a drawing to win one of the statues.

“The rabbit statues refer to a chapter in Chatham County's history when it was the source for the ‘Chatham Rabbit,’ a delicacy served in the finest hotels and rail cars all along the East Coast,” said Main Street Pittsboro Chair Maria Parker-Lewis. “With this symbol of spring, we can have fun and support downtown businesses at the same time.”

In acknowledgement of Pittsboro's thriving creative culture, the rabbit statues will all be creatively embellished by local artists including Theresa Arico Mosaics, Lani Chaves, Sally Gregoire and Darcy Szeremi, many of whom are exhibiting artists at the Pittsboro Gallery of the Arts.

Station Five will feature the 250 Foundations public art project where Chathamites can participate by placing a rock, adding their piece, sharing their wish and being a founder of this county. Community members will be able to prepare for this station in advance.

“People can either decorate their rock before arriving, adding their name or the name of someone they might want to honor or a symbol that represents them,” said Marcela Slade, Executive Director for Abundance NC. “Since these rocks will be displayed outside, they should be decorated with something that will last, like acrylic paint or enamel. If people would rather not decorate they can wish upon the rock something they would like to see happen this year...or give thanks for something that has already happened.”

More information on the 250 Foundations public art project can be found at www.chatham250.com.

Station Six will feature an introduction to the Chatham 250 Time Capsule, where participants will be able to contribute their piece of 2021 history. As part of Founding Day and throughout the Chatham 250 celebration, volunteers will be collecting items for inclusion in the official Chatham 250 Time Capsule. The Time Capsule will include items representing current events and the way of life of Chatham County in its 250th year, 2021. The Time Capsule will be sealed at the conclusion of Chatham 250 in Fall 2021 and it is not to be opened again until Chatham County's 300th year, in the year 2071. Suggested items community members can contribute to the Time Capsule may be found at www.chatham250.com.

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At the final stations, participants can look forward to a birthday party theme. There will be a goodie bag, piñata raffle and a sweet treat for people to take home. The piñatas, purchased from local tiendas in Siler City, Tienda El Centro and La Guadalupeana, will be raffled off for free. Each person to drive through will be allowed to enter their name into one of the two raffles. The piñatas will be filled with Hispanic candies traditionally used for piñatas. As for the sweet treat, there will be chocolate and vanilla cake pops for the first 250 people to drive through. Chatham 250 is excited to be working with Pittsboro bakery, Carolina Cravings, to supply the cake pops. The cake pops are generously donated by Main Street Pittsboro. Lastly, participants can look forward to goodie bags with a coloring page, a miniature American Flag, bubbles, and more items inside.

In order to enjoy Founding Day to its full extent, residents can make an entire day out of it. The Pittsboro Business Association is encouraging businesses that are open to participate in the festivities. Participating businesses will have a balloon outside. Please note that road construction in downtown Pittsboro will not affect access to Founding Day events or businesses that are open.

The Chatham 250 planning committee would like to give a special thank you to Founding Day sponsor, the Town of Pittsboro. Check out the official Facebook event for Founding Day at <https://fb.me/e/1j2IXYzWr>. For more information on Founding Day, and other Chatham 250 activities, visit www.chatham250.com.