

Gator Tales



Volume 3, Issue 11

Newsletter Date: Summer 2015

A newsletter for the citizens of the PRVWSD community

The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District

Please help us reduce costs by taking the time to **register now** for the **digital edition** of the newsletter at: Response@TheRez.MS

Celebrating Independence and 50 years of The REZ



The 4th annual Barnett Reservoir Independence Celebration will have a special meaning in 2015 — the 50th anniversary of the impoundment of the 33,000-acre lake.

Scheduled for June 27 at both Old Trace and Lakeshore Parks, the event will conclude with a coordinated double fireworks show at 9:30 p.m., with rockets bursting in air over both sides of the lower main lake.

Sponsored by the Barnett Reservoir Foundation, the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District and the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), it will be a tribute to the many contributions The Rez has made to the Central Mississippi area

since it was first filled in 1965.

Barnett Reservoir is the chief source of water for the City of Jackson, as well as serving as one of the state's top recreational destinations with all the economic benefits.

“As the next 50 years begin, it is important that we recognize the important role Barnett Reservoir has played in Mississippi,” said John Sigman, General Manager of PRVWSD, the state agency that oversees operation of the lake. “While we celebrate that, we must also stress the importance of protecting this valuable resource.”

MDEQ helps do that for the next generation with its annual youth-oriented WaterFest, which will be held at Old Trace Park from 4-7 p.m. In addition to fun things for children to do, valuable environmental education opportunities are available.

Both parks will be filled with activities for all ages, as well as serving as prime viewing sites for the lighted boat parade and the coordinated fireworks show that ends the event. MISS-103 FM will provide a simulcast of music to accompany the fireworks. While the parks will be open to foot traffic all day, the official event hours are 4 p.m. to conclusion of the 9:30 fireworks show.

Admission is free, but donations to Barnett Reservoir Foundation will be accepted at the gate to help pay for the fireworks. Many food and beverage vendors, including beer gardens, will be available at both parks. No outside coolers will be allowed. Find more event details on Page 3 or visit BarnettReservoirFoundation.org.



News Around the REZ

Reservoir Board Rescinds Proposed Lake Usage Fee

After considering public response, the Board of Directors for the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District decided to rescind its proposed lake user fee at Ross Barnett Reservoir.

Under the now-scuttled plan, effective Oct. 1, 2015, all boats launched or moored at the 33,000-acre lake would have been required to have a decal displayed on its forward hull near its state registration decal.

Annual fees would have ranged from \$35 a year for boats under 26 feet, to \$50 for boats 26 feet and longer. A \$10 10-day permit was also proposed.

The projected annual revenue from the program ranged from \$250,000 to \$300,000, which was to be put in a special fund account to be used solely for recreation and boating infrastructure on the 50-year-old lake.

“We received many comments both pro and con on the proposed user fee, and after taking those into consideration, the Board decided it would be best to send it back to the staff for further study,” said John Sigman, general manager of the PRVWSD. “This serves as an example of our board’s willingness to listen to its constituents and involve them in the decision-making process.”

Sigman said the Board of Directors has tasked the PRVWSD staff with seeking and developing additional revenue sources to fund the recreational needs of the District, and he said that work would continue.



Sgt. Neely (left) pictured with Judge Bill Skinner and Reservoir Police Chief Perry Waggener

Neely named Top Cop by Reservoir Police

Sgt. Rick Neely’s quick response to a houseboat fire in 2014 following the Pepsi Pops concert on Ross Barnett Reservoir has earned him the Reservoir Police Department’s Top Cop nomination.

According to Reservoir Police Chief Perry Waggener, on May 16, 2014, a houseboat exploded and burned just off the Breakers Condominium Complex near the mouth of Main Harbor. Sgt. Neely responded, along with conservation officers from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks.

“Sgt. Neely’s skills as a Marine enabled him to recover the victims from the dark, rough waters quickly and transport them to awaiting emergency medical care,” Waggener said. “His prompt efforts prevented a potential catastrophe.”

Numbers to Know:

Emergency: Emergencies can be reported 24 hours a day, seven days a week by contacting the Reservoir Control Tower at (601) 992-9703.

Non-emergency: For questions regarding PRVWSD policies and properties, contact the PRVWSD office during normal business hours at (601) 856-6574.

On the water: Boaters experiencing problems on the water requiring towing assistance should call *Sea Tow*, a private business specializing in emergency assistance, at (601) 992-0321.

SCHEDULED EVENTS

June 27	Fireworks	ALL	Independence Celebration
Aug. 8	Tri 4 Life	FL	Triathlon
Aug. 29	CARA	PSP	Dog event
Sept. 26	Gator Bait	PSP	Kayak Race
Oct. 4	Ironman Triathlon	LS	Race
Oct. 7	Lucky 7 Run	SP	Run
Oct. 23-24	Smokin’ on The REZ	OT	BBQ contest / live music
Nov. 15	Barnett Arts & Crafts Fair	LS	Arts & Crafts Fair

OT- Old Trace Park / LS—Lakeshore Park / PSP—Pelahatchie Shore Park
SP - Spillway Road / FL— Fannin Landing



Kayak Launch Opens at Turtle Point

Responding to the rapid growth of kayaking on Barnett Reservoir, PRVWSD has opened its new launch site at Turtle Point Nature Area Trail and Kayak Launch in Pelahatchie Bay. The site is located at the northwest corner of Turtle Point and includes a floating courtesy pier. Turtle Point is located on Scenic Drive between the Turtle Creek and Forest Point subdivisions.

Use of the ramp is free. Turtle Point Nature Area Trail and Kayak Launch was 80 percent funded by a federal grant provided through the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks’ Recreational Trails Program, with PRVWSD paying the other 20 percent. The total amount of federal funding used was \$100,000.

THE
FOURTH ANNUAL
Independence
CELEBRATION

Let there be music

Music stages at both Lakeshore and Old Trace Parks will be producing tunes during the 4th annual Independence Celebration June 27 at Barnett Reservoir.

Old Trace Park: Music will be piped through the park in Madison County during the WaterFest event from 4-7 p.m., before the sounds go live with Stogdaddy and the Good Time Band at 7 p.m., followed by Hairicane at 8 p.m.

Lakeshore Park: At this Rankin County venue, the live tunes will start at 4 p.m. from Joseph LaSalle. He'll be followed by AM/FM before the Dylan Moss Band closes the playlist shortly before the 9:30 fireworks show. Lakeshore is also location of the car show and cardboard boat races.



Come join the parade

The 4th annual Independence Celebration Lighted Boat Parade will begin at sunset June 27 from Main Harbor and take a path that includes passing both Lakeshore and Old Trace Parks, and by the judges stationed at the Jackson Yacht Club. Cash prizes will be awarded for the top two boats in each division: boats up to 29 feet and boats over 29 feet.



The entry fee is \$30 per boat and a captain's meeting will be held at 6 p.m. on June 24 at the Jackson Yacht Club. Boat captains will receive full information on the route, mandatory minimum speeds, boat strobes and entry numbers.

For more information or to download an official entry form, call Cindy Ford at (601) 856-6574 or visit BarnettReservoirFoundation.org.



Reservoir Y sponsors cardboard boat races

The Reservoir YMCA will give amateur boat builders an opportunity to show their skills in their 2nd Racin' on The Rez Cardboard and Duct Tape Boat Race during the Independence Celebration June 27 at Barnett Reservoir. Only cardboard and duct tape can be used to build the boats, which will run a short course in a cove at Lakeshore Park. There will be a division for adults (4 to a team) and competition for children grouped by age (8-11, 12-14 and 15-17). And, yes, PFDs are required of all boaters. Remember, it's cardboard.

For more information, contact the Reservoir Y at metroYMCams.org.



WaterFest returns

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality will hold its 9th annual WaterFest at Old Trace Park from 4-7 p.m. as part of the Barnett Reservoir Foundation's Independence Celebration.

Loaded with events for children, WaterFest is a fun way to introduce youngsters to the importance of protecting the environment including the 50-year-old Barnett Reservoir. WaterFest is part of MDEQ's Rezonate program, spotlighting the importance of protecting, restoring and improving the water quality of the 33,000-acre lake.

This year's event will feature music, interactive displays, kids' zone with inflatables and waterslides, face painting, balloon artists, caricature artists, children's crafts, games, door prizes, photo booths and educational exhibits.

Admission is free, and food and beverage vendors will be in the park. No outside coolers will be allowed.

After WaterFest, participants can stick around the park for more live music, kids events and the double fireworks show at 9:30.

FENDERS & FIREWORKS CLASSIC CAR SHOW



Attention car & truck aficionados

A classic car show, called Fenders and Fireworks, will be held at Lakeshore Park in conjunction with the 4th annual Independence Celebration June 27 at Barnett Reservoir. Not only a way to show their beautiful vehicles, drivers will be competing for trophies in both car and truck divisions. They also get prime parking in a great viewing area for the double fireworks show that ends the day at 9:30 Saturday night.

For information on entering (\$30) the Classic Car show, contact Amy Whiteley at either (601) 856-6574 or awhitelev@therez.ms.



Splash and Dash Run



The Brain Injury Association of Mississippi will hold a 5K race and a 1-mile fun run to kickoff the Independence Celebration June 27 at the Reservoir.

Called Splash and Dash, due to the nearly 100 percent chance that at some point(s) on the trails runners will be splashed with water from balloons and/or super soakers, the event will be staged early at Old Trace Park.

Race day registration will be from 6:30-7:30 a.m. with the 5K run and walk starting at 8 a.m. and the 1 mile fun run starting at 9 a.m. All races will begin and end near the Ridgeland Recreational Center at Old Trace Park. For information, contact the Brain Injury Association of Mississippi at (601) 981-1021.



P. O. Box 2180
Ridgeland, MS 39158
Phone: 601-856-6574
Fax: 601-856-2585
E-mail: cford@therez.ms

What is the Barnett Reservoir Foundation?



The Barnett Reservoir Foundation is a tax exempt non-profit 501(c)3 that was founded to assist the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District in promoting recreation and interest in the Ross Barnett Reservoir for businesses and families.

The Foundation raises funds for projects to enhance and improve the quality of life for residents and provide recreational opportunities for visitors. It also sponsors several annual events, including the Independence Celebration, the Smokin' on The Rez BBQ and Music Festival and an Arts and Craft Fair.

Joining is easy; simply visit BarnettReservoirFoundation.org online and click on the Become a Member link at the top of the homepage.

Levels include Platinum Member \$350 (Yearly \$75); Gold Member \$250 (Yearly \$100); Silver Member \$150 (Yearly \$125) and, active individual membership \$50 (yearly).

For information, contact either BRF Board President Doug Berry at doug@dougberry.biz or Susan McMullan at smcmullan@therez.ms.

Foundation sponsorship information

The Barnett Reservoir Foundation could not present the annual Independence Celebration and other events without the help of its members and sponsors, who support BRF's efforts to promote The Rez and its community.

If you would like to join the Barnett Reservoir Foundation or become a Community Sponsor and help support The Rez, contact Foundation president Doug Berry at doug@dougberry.biz, board member Bobby Cleveland at bobbyc7754@yahoo.com or Susan McMullan at smcmullan@therez.ms.