

Southeast Tourism Society Selects the Franklin County Watermelon Festival as a 'STS Top 20 Event'

Travel industry organization has saluted region's best events since 1985

ATLANTA, Ga. (April 26, 2016) – The Southeast Tourism Society has named the Franklin County Watermelon Festival one of the STS Top 20 Event in the Southeast for August, 2016.

This year's Franklin County Watermelon Festival is August 19th and 20th. The STS Top 20 Festival and Event Awards have highlighted programs around the Southeast since 1985.

Travel industry experts select 20 events per month, and STS publicizes them throughout the United States. The complete list is published on two websites: EscapeToTheSoutheast.com and [Travel Media Press Room](http://TravelMediaPressRoom.com).

Downtown Russellville is home of the Franklin County Watermelon Festival and the Watermelon Capital of Alabama. The Watermelon Festival began in 1981 as a way for local merchants to draw more people into the area. In the South when people gather, food is always involved. A local farmer agreed to grow the watermelons to share on the hot summer day. Since then, the festival has grown into a two day event with tractor, car & truck shows, BBQ cook-off, and entertainment. The Watermelon Festival is the perfect opportunity for local civic clubs, churches and schools to interact with their neighbors and guests of the event. Live entertainment is enjoyed in the historic Roxy Theatre and at the outdoor main stage. August heat does not deter attendees, 35,000 people are welcomed by watermelon banners, festival food and vendor booths. Attendees travel from all over the southeast to spend a few days and a few dollars at the largest festival in Franklin County. The Franklin County Watermelon Queen awards prizes for the watermelon contests: best dressed, largest weighing, best tasting, most unusual and seed spitting. True to southern hospitality, complimentary fresh slices of red or yellow meated watermelon are served both days. What makes the event different this year?

The Watermelon Festival always promotes the State of Alabama's Tourism theme making it unique to our event. The 2016 Watermelon theme will be "The Year of Franklin County Makers", showcasing businesses and industries products made within our county. The festival theme will be placed on posters, billboards, event brochures and the ever popular Watermelon Tee!

"How excited we are to be chosen as a Southeast Tourism Society Top 20 Event. When Mr. Bolton started the Watermelon Festival, he knew it would be great for the City of Russellville. It has been cared for over the past few decades and grown into the largest festival in Franklin County and northwest Alabama. We look forward to seeing people all over the country visiting Russellville & Franklin County on this weekend. We hope families enjoy the atmosphere and make this weekend a "must do" event for years to come." City of Russellville Mayor, David Grissom

“The Southeast Tourism Society’s Top 20 Festival and Event list is an excellent guide for the Southeast’s visitors and residents. Events selected represent the best, and often most unique, activities in our region,” said Bill Hardman, president and CEO of the Southeast Tourism Society.

Events considered for the STS Top 20 recognition must be at least three years old and have attendance of at least 1,000. Nomination forms and deadlines are available at SoutheastTourism.org or by calling 770-542-1523.

STS, founded in 1983 and headquartered in Atlanta, Ga., is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting tourism to and within 12 states – Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

Contact

Name: Cassie Medley, Executive Director, Franklin County Chamber of Commerce

Email: director@franklincountychamber.org

Phone: 256.332.1760