

Wilkes Community College's



MerleFest®

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ON THE CAMPUS OF WILKES COMMUNITY COLLEGE, WILKESBORO, NC

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MERLEFEST 25 VENDOR APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED BEGINNING NOVEMBER 1

WILKESBORO, N.C. (October 12, 2011)—Plans for MerleFest 25 are well underway, and the festival is now soliciting applications from vendors and artisans interested in participating in this momentous festival. Applications will be accepted beginning November 1.

“MerleFest prides itself on offering unique vendors, ones you don’t see every day,” says Melissa Stanley, Events Logistics Specialist for MerleFest. “We want our guests to look forward to returning each year to see what we have to offer in The Shoppes at MerleFest and in the Heritage Crafts area. Therefore, we are always seeking a bigger variety of applicants so that we can make these areas of the festival interesting and enjoyable for all.”

MerleFest is accepting applications from vendors and retail merchants for The Shoppes at MerleFest and from demonstrating artisans and crafts persons for the Heritage Crafts tent. These participants benefit from the opportunity to take part at MerleFest. They help a non-profit organization raise funds for Wilkes Community College as well as helping the overall community impact of the festival.

Anyone interested in participating in The Shoppes at MerleFest or the Heritage Crafts area should visit www.merlefest.org/vendors/ to review the rules and guidelines in place for vendors and to download an application. This website offers all information pertinent to vendor participation. MerleFest will accept applications from November 1, 2011, through January 15, 2012. A committee reviews the applications and makes the selections. Acceptance letters will be mailed to selected vendors in February 2012.

“Being a MerleFest vendor provides many great opportunities,” says Stanley. “Many of our vendors come back year after year, so there is camaraderie all around. Most of the vendors camp together near their booths, and at night they talk about the various places, festivals and events in which they participate. They help one another and share information on opportunities beyond MerleFest. We have one vendor that has participated every year since the inception of The Shoppes at MerleFest.”

Barry Shisler, proprietor of Sweet Springs Hammock in Sweet Spring, West Virginia, says there are many reasons that he returns to MerleFest year after year.

“To start with, the music is wonderful. The staff people are very, very helpful and dedicated, and they do a wonderful job of organization. There’s no stress or confusion at MerleFest. Everything is very straightforward,” says Shisler. “I attend about 20 festivals every year. Unlike a lot of other festivals, MerleFest does not have a lot of annoyances like inebriation. It is a wonderful family-friendly event. The

crowd that generally attends MerleFest, for the most part, is respectful. You feel safe and comfortable to bring your children.

“The fans must feel like I do because they just keep returning. There are a lot of repeat customers, so I recognize faces year after year. There are some customers that come to my booth every single year to purchase something. My overriding feeling as a vendor is that we are treated with kindness and respect, and any concerns that we have are always addressed very promptly,” adds Shisler. “If there is one word that I can use to describe my experience at MerleFest, it would be delightful.”

And, just because vendors are busy in their tents selling merchandise does not mean they are cut off from the excitement of spotting artists around campus. One well-known artist is a frequent, albeit incognito, guest in The Shoppes at MerleFest.

Vendors must follow specific guidelines put in place by MerleFest. The guidelines have been developed and refined over the years to make The Shoppes run more smoothly for the vendors, MerleFest guests and for the festival.

All vendor tents are 10-foot by 10-foot. Vendors can rent one tent, two adjoining tents or three adjoining tents. Rental fee for one tent is \$850.00; two tents, \$1,700; and three tents, \$2,200. Each vendor receives two 4-day general admission wristbands for each 10-foot by 10-foot space rented as well as one parking space close to The Shoppes at MerleFest. Additionally, MerleFest provides the tents, fire extinguishers, trash pickup and any other logistical essentials to setting up the area. All vendors need to do is bring their product and sell.

All of The Shoppes are set up on pavement. Also, they are located immediately through the Entrance Gate, so most of the paying public must walk through The Shoppes to get to the main stage and walk back through The Shoppes when exiting. This greatly increases the foot traffic that vendors have visiting their “stores.”

“This year we are hoping to offer a greater diversity of product in The Shoppes at MerleFest. I strongly encourage anyone with inimitable, unusual or highly sought after merchandise to consider participating in MerleFest 25,” says Stanley. “This year will be our 25th annual festival. Don’t miss the opportunity to be a part of this historic event.”

PHOTOS:



Caption: Banner flying over The Shoppes at MerleFest



Caption: Weaving loom used by artisan in Heritage Crafts tent



Caption: Jewelry vendor display in The Shoppes at MerleFest

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