

Festival...from Page 1A



2017 Massed Bands. Photo/Lily Avery

a merry time for the coming games.

"Good Afternoon," said Fraser. "It is a privilege for Clan Fraser to be recognized as the honored clan of the 2017 Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games. We are very grateful."

Along with being the honored clan, Clan Fraser also received the honor of displaying the Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games sword in front of their tent for all to see and to recognize the honored clan.

"Each year in Blairsville, we have a tradition," said Debbie McGregor, Blairsville Scottish Festival Committee member. "We have a sword

that started with Clan Blair in 2004 that we set in front of the honored clan tent. The 14th year is now represented by Clan Fraser. "They are our honored clan and this sword in its display case will live in front of their tent for the weekend."

There are still 12 more clans from the original 26 clans to be honored before the committee begins selecting from newly added clans.

While the festival and games seem to be a weekend of ease and entertainment, the 16-person Blairsville Scottish Festival Committee plan for each year's games a year in advance, working around the clock to make sure that every year runs more smoothly than the last.

And for good reason too, with the growing rate of the festival. The weekend of June 10-11, saw close to 9,000 festivalgoers come through Meeks Park, and that is only an estimate.

"We normally say between 5,000 and 6,000 paid attendants each weekend," said Satterfield. "We could easily have around 8,000 people in the park today but a lot of them may not be paid because they could be an invited clan or under 12 years old or a volunteer."

"But it seems to be growing every year. The first year, we calculated around 3,000 people and it has grown each year and we expect to have around 9,000 people this weekend between the two days."

While there are no definite numbers for just how many people are brought into the area each year with the Blairsville Scottish Festival and Highland Games, it is safe to say that Union County and the surrounding area see a great



2017 Parade of Tartans. Photo/Lily Avery



Joe Satterfield and Travis Adams at the Opening Ceremony of the festival. Photo/Lily Avery

deal of business from the large influx of festival-bound folk.

At the end of the day, numbers aside, volunteers and clansmen and festivalgoers alike enjoyed a weekend full of family-fun, games

and reveling in the Scottish Highland spirit.

"It's all about that unity of spirit," said Redditt. "It's an awesome, awesome experience."

McBride...from Page 1A

Friday, June 23.

This will be McBride's first trip to Hiawasse, though not her first trip to Georgia, as the majority of her fan-base comes from the Southeastern region of the U.S.

And while it may be McBride's first show in the area, she is more than ready to spend some quality time with her fans in the mountains.

During the June 23 show, the audience can expect to hear a little bit of everything from McBride, including songs from her most recent album, "Reckless."

"I'm going to be doing a lot of my hits during this show," said McBride. "I'll also be doing songs from my new album, Reckless, and a couple of cover songs. It's going to be a fun night. My whole goal is to create an environment where everybody can forget about this crazy world we're living in for a couple of hours and just really enjoy music and being together."

"Hopefully everyone can leave the concert feeling more positive and happier".

Last year, McBride began touring under what she called the "Love Unleashed Tour." The tour was spearheaded in conjunction with her latest album, "Reckless," as a way to promote positivity and unity throughout the country.

According to McBride, with the political and social climate around the world, it is often easy to get caught up in the turmoil and tragedy and McBride's mission with Love Unleashed is to create an oasis away from that madness and bring people back to a place of happiness, which is often music.

After the original extension of the tour in the beginning of 2017, McBride decided to continue with the Love Unleashed Tour mission, regardless of what

she was calling this next leg of touring. And that's where the Hiawasse show fits in.

"We're continuing that theme," said McBride. "I feel like it's such an important thing right now, to spread some positivity to all of these towns and cities that we're visiting. It's so important."

As far as the new album "Reckless," fans can definitely expect the typical strong, resonating vocals that are McBride's trademark, but just a touch less country. Inspired by her personal journey and growth, McBride hit the ground running with this new album and no one would suspect this is her first album in 10 years.

"It's my first country record in a long time," said McBride. "I was inspired to get back into the studio and find some good songs. The songs are about real life that people can relate to."

"It has a little bit of a throwback sound to the late 90s and early 2000s, when I was first starting out. I'm really proud of it. I think it's one of the best albums I've ever done."

After touring, McBride has a couple more projects up her sleeve and fans can expect to see much more of the country music icon in the coming years.

"I'm finishing up a Christmas album that will come out in November or October," said McBride. "I'm working on a couple of other projects right now, but I can't really say what just yet, but I'm excited about what the future holds. It's going to be good."

Tickets for the show are still available, and can be purchased at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds website for \$55 plus \$2 handling for Level 1 seating, and for \$45 plus \$2 handling for Level II seating.