



HAPPY 75TH BIRTHDAY, GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK!

Come Celebrate in Beautiful Swain County, NC. They came from throughout the countryside, parking their 1930s-era cars along the Clingman's Dome Road and Highway 441 at Newfound Gap. Excitement filled the crisp mountain air as revelers walked toward the newly erected Rockefeller Memorial where Franklin Delano Roosevelt, standing with one foot in North Carolina and one in Tennessee, proudly dedicated the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to "the free people of America." This year the festive atmosphere returns to Swain County where special events celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the most visited national park in America.

Celebrating the Green Earth. "We're thrilled to have several of our events placed on the official 75th Anniversary calendar," says Karen Wilmot, executive director of the Swain County Chamber of Commerce, "especially our first annual Celebrate Earth Environmental Fair." The fair, slated for April 18, is designed to entertain as well as educate locals and visitors about the green options that can be incorporated into daily life. "With a large part of the Park actually contained within Swain County," Wilmot went on to say, "our people and businesses are always mindful of green practices that preserve and protect this beautiful part of the country."

Honoring the Park's Champion. No voice spoke out more eloquently for the establishment of the Park than that of Horace Kephart. The Pennsylvania librarian lived among the Southern Highlanders in the early 20th century and later penned persuasive articles in favor of preserving the Smoky Mountains for all time. On Friday, May 1, Swain County honors their adopted son with Horace Kephart Day. The event includes a service at Kephart's grave and readings from the author's works at The Historic Calhoun House Hotel in Bryson City.

Playful Pickin'. The 75th Anniversary calendar includes Bryson City's 14th Annual Heritage Festival, May 23 and 24. With song, dance, crafts, contests and games, the festival brings to life the area's Scots-Irish and Cherokee traditions. And for a heaping helping of traditional mountain music drop by the train station in Bryson City any Saturday night, from June 6 through October 31, for Music in the Mountains – a free event where local musicians pick and sing cherished ballads and reels, whose roots stretch back to the British Isles.

Pastels for the Park. "When I heard about the 75th Anniversary events, I knew I wanted in," says Peggy Duncan, pastel artist and owner of Bryson City's Artists' House Too. Peggy got word out to other members of the Appalachian Pastel Society and organized Pastels for the Park, on the 75th Anniversary calendar for Saturday, June 6. The show and reception features 40 pastel paintings by member artists – all depicting scenes from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The paintings hang in Artists' House Too through Saturday, June 27, with artists donating 10 percent of proceeds to Friends of the Smokies. "Every day I take a walk in the Park's Deep Creek area," says Peggy. "I just wanted to give something back."

For more information on touring the Smokies, contact the Swain County Chamber of Commerce, 210 Main Street, P.O. Box 509, Bryson City, NC 28713; chamber@greatsmokies.com; or 800.867.9246.