

109th Annual

# GeorgeFest

America the Beautiful



Events



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The Parade



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The city of Eustis, Florida has been celebrating the birthday of our nation's first President, George Washington, for over 100 years. This puts Eustis on the map, as it has the 2nd longest running GeorgeFest in the nation, second only to Laredo, Texas.

A little history about GeorgeFest:

***The first festival was held on February 22, 1902 on the grounds of the Ocklawaha Hotel. Residents produced a pageant depicting the early history of the State of Florida, the Nation as a whole, and how the Eustis area was settled. Tourists staying at the hotel enjoyed the festival and many visitors from nearby villages came by horse, mule, foot or boat to enjoy the events.***

***The idea of the festival took hold and were held in subsequent years, gradually growing in scope and acceptance as an event to attend. In later years, people were even brought in by trains for the event. In 1911, the crowd was estimated at about 2,500 – about twice the size of the actual population of Eustis! Today more than 10,000 people attend the annual festival.***

***Eventually, as the parade and boating elements came into the picture, the activities migrated to the downtown and lakeside areas. Various types of boat races were introduced. When it was time to watch a water event, everyone went to the lake-shore of the city pier at the end of Magnolia Ave. This pier was about where the Lake Eustis Area Chamber of Commerce is now located, before Ferran Park was built.***

Thousands continue to turn out to enjoy the multi-day event. Whether they are there to sample the foods, watch the parade, participate in the various games (Citrus Squeeze, Cart Races – formerly the Bed Races, Pie Eating Contest, and many more), listen to the live bands, or just enjoy the rides, there is sure to be something to tickle your fancy and give you a full weekend of entertainment.

GeorgeFest is generally held the last weekend of February and takes months to plan. Every little detail is looked

at from the main street shops with their display windows to the floats in the parade to clean up after the event. And the most amazing part of this event is that it is put together by volunteers looking for nothing more than to promote the event, the city, and the history. And every year, this event is made successful due to various fund raisers and generous sponsorships from local businesses and citizens.

We look forward to seeing you at GeorgeFest in Eustis™!!! Enjoy the photos and stories in our blog to see what it is all about.

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