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## Core values: Sykesville offers 'a-peeling' set of apple events

09/26/07

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It's been 40 years since Sykesville was heavily involved in the apple processing business, but the community is embracing that heritage this weekend with dual events named for that juicy treat.

With Piney Run Park's annual Apple Festival set for Saturday, Sept. 29, and the town's monthly Apple Butter Market on Sunday, Sept. 30, this coming weekend opens the autumn season with a harvest of fun, food and activity bound to appeal to every Granny Smith and American Beauty.

"It's hopefully going to be good weather," said Melissa Delbusso, one of the organizers of Sykesville's Apple Butter Markets, "and if (visitors) don't get their apple butter on Saturday, they can get it on Sunday."

The apple-theme starts off at Piney Run Park and Nature Center, located at 30 Martz Road, Sykesville.

The park's annual Apple Festival, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., is set among the lake and park grounds, and includes a full day of music, activities, food and, of course, apples.

Activities include wagon rides, face painting, cider pressing, scarecrow making, games and pumpkin painting. This year the festival is going to the dogs somewhat -- the group, Maryland Sled Dog Adventures, will be on hand with sled dog demonstrations and rides.

Entertainment ranges from bands to puppet shows; a live raptor display to performances by a local cloggers group.

Food includes apple dumplings, apple fritters, warm apple cider and more, with baked goods, bratwurst and even an old-fashioned cooking demonstration. In addition, vendors and crafters will be on hand, some performing demonstrations



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of their artistry.

Park entrance fees at Piney Run are \$5 per vehicle for Carroll County residents and \$8 vehicle for all others. Some activities at the festival are free; others have a small fee. Food at the festival is available for purchase. For more details, call the park at 410-795-6043.

Meanwhile, on the other side of town, Sunday's Apple Butter Market is part of a series launched last year by Destination Sykesville, a volunteer group that promotes Sykesville and its historic downtown as a visitor destination.

Markets are held the last Sunday of each month, May through October, at the former Renehan apple processing facility, a storage building that was used from the 1910s to the 1960s as part of the company's production of apple butter, then later juice.

The park-like property, just off Sykesville's Main Street along the Patapsco River, is truly a mix of old and new. Early this year the town reached a deal with Howard County to lease the site and develop it as a park. The town hopes to make the markets, and the property, a key component of its tourism efforts.

Much of that ambition was born of the market series. Delbusso and Ann Sulewski, another Destination Sykesville volunteer, gather together local farmers with fruits, vegetables and other products -- yes, including apple butter -- as well as artists, crafters, antique dealers and school and community groups.

The event turns the grounds of the apple factory into a bustling marketplace. Nearby, Sykesville's trails along the river and its historic district beckon to families and those anxious for a brisk walk.

An added attraction this year has been live performances of the Shakespeare Factory, a troupe that includes Century High School's Rude Mechanicals organization, as well as the new Touchstone Players, an elementary and middle school troupe. On Sunday, members will perform selections from their upcoming production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

The Apple Butter Market is held 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 30, with the Shakespeare Factory performances at 11 a.m. and noon. Admission is free.

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