

NEWS RELEASE



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WAKE PREPARES FOR OPENING OF N.C. STATE FAIR

*Members of the media are invited to take photos and conduct interviews with Wake County inspection staff and emergency personnel on-site at the North Carolina State Fair on **Wednesday, October 14, 2015**. To make arrangements, contact Catherine Glover at 919-856-5597.*

Wake County plays a significant role in protecting the public and reducing the spread of germs at the North Carolina State Fair. Four County groups play integral roles in the opening and daily management of the State Fair, including Food Safety and Sanitation, Water Quality, Emergency Medical Services and the Sheriff's Office.

"Environmental Health is important every day," said Environmental Services Director Joseph Threadcraft. "When you have thousands of people in close proximity to each other, as we do at the Fair, there are increased opportunities for disease to spread. We do our very best to reduce those opportunities through regular food, water and sewer inspections."

Food Permits

In 2014, Environmental Services issued 144 permits to food vendors. Prior to the fair, each vendor must submit an application, which is then reviewed by Wake County's Environmental Health Inspections and Plan Review team. Once the vendors have been approved and set up their sites, an inspector will go out and permit the vendor, allowing them to cook and sale food.

All 30 food and sanitation inspectors will spend at least two days, including weekend inspections, inspecting and permitting vendors. After the fair opens, there are at least two inspectors on site doing daily inspections and following up on complaints.

Water and Sewer Permits

The Water Quality division of Environmental Services inspects the water and sewer connections serving the living quarters of the fair carnival workers and exhibitors to

make sure they are properly connected to the City of Raleigh's Sanitary Sewer System. All living quarters are inspected prior to the fair starting, and re-inspected each day.

Inspectors collect contact information for the owners; and permits issued under the system are color coded – green for living quarters that are properly connected to water and sanitary sewer, or yellow for living quarters that are not connected to water or sewer.

In 2014, 350 campers and other living quarters were inspected for temporary sewer and water connections.

“Wake County provides integral public safety services at the State Fair,” said Chris Colangelo, Interim Director of Wake County Emergency Medical Services (EMS). “Along with the Sheriff's Office, Western Wake Fire Department and Red Cross, EMS operates out of a mobile command post that houses a panel of telecommunications from across the State.”

Sheriff's Office

The Wake County Sheriff's Office serves as the lead agency for all security and law enforcement activities during the State Fair and is responsible for both foot and mobile patrol, investigating suspicious and criminal activity and assisting the public during their visits. In addition to the deputies on duty, there are also undercover officers, and members from the Drug and Vice and Special Response teams monitoring the fairgrounds daily.

Each day, an average of 150 personnel from the Sheriff's Office are assigned to staff the fair, with anywhere between 85 and 100 deputies being on-site at one time. An additional number of detention officers are responsible for gate security and traffic control during the fair.

EMS

Each year, Wake County EMS has a fully-staffed team on-site at the State Fair during all operational hours. This includes three ambulances, two bike teams and a cart to transport patients through the fairgrounds to the nearest ambulance.

The Red Cross and EMS paramedics work together to take care of any patient brought to the first aid areas. Additionally, EMS staff have a booth presence where those attending the fair can learn more about Wake County EMS.

There are other areas of the fair where Wake County is not directly responsible, but offers assistance as needed, including the livestock and entertainment areas. Raleigh Animal Control is responsible for any companion animals on-site and calls the Wake County Animal Center, if needed. The rides and carnival games are inspected prior to opening and daily by the North Carolina Department of Labor. In case of an emergency, the Sheriff's Office assists with security, response and investigations involving these areas.

The North Carolina State Fair will be held October 15-25, 2015, at the State Fairgrounds, 1025 Blue Ridge Road, Raleigh.

For additional questions about the State Fair, please contact the State Fair Press Office at 919-821-7400.

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