



NEWS RELEASE

Contact:

**Maria Jurado-Flynn, Executive Director
Cleveland Better Home Town, Inc.**

Phone: (706) 969-3336 * mflynn@clevelandbetterhometown.org

This Year's Fall Leaf Festival will Honor Public Service (Public Safety Agencies, Military and Youth Service)

Cleveland, Georgia (September 15, 2009) – What better way to say thank you to the people that keep us safe each day than to throw a party celebrating their service? That's what Cleveland Better Home Town is doing this year with the Fall Leaf Festival. The event will take place on **Saturday, September 26th from 10:00am – 4:00pm in Historic Downtown Cleveland.**

Our local public safety agencies are so important to our community and we wanted to honor the important role they play," said Maria Jurado-Flynn, Executive Director for Cleveland Better Home Town. What firefighter or police officer doesn't love to BBQ? **The Hillbilly Hog Backyard BBQ Throwdown** is the centerpiece of this year's event and is aimed at bringing out the best BBQ cooks in the area, while supporting a very special cause, our own local public safety agencies. The call for BBQ competitors has brought out some exciting entries like the Smokin Gun BBQ, Big Boy's BBQ, Swamp Cat BBQ, Dead Man's BBQ, TD's BBQ, Papa G's BBQ, Pot's BBQ and even the Army National Guard has entered its Q Crew Team in the competition as well as the Helen Police Department. The grand champion of the competition will not only win prize money for their team, but the public safety agency they checked on their entry form will win \$1,000 for new equipment.

Community Bank & Trust is the presenting sponsor of the Backyard BBQ Throwdown. Jeff Hunt, who is the White County Division President for Community Bank & Trust and also serves as the Vice-Chairman for Cleveland Better Home Town, had this to say, "We are thrilled to be able to support our local 'public safety heroes' and to continue our support of the Cleveland Better Home Town Program." Hunt is a life-long resident of White County and went on to say, "These types of events are economic drivers for our community. What better way to bring people back to downtown than to throw a little BBQ competition?"

Heroes can come in small packages too and this year's Fall Leaf Festival is being chaired by one of Cleveland's little heroes, Tyler Dorsey. For the second year in a row, this special 11 year old is at the helm as Chairman of the event. "I hope everyone can come out to support our police, firefighters, EMS and our 911 center. They do so much to protect us and keep us safe." Tyler's father is a Cleveland Police Officer. This year Tyler has some help. Through his leadership, a **Junior Board of Directors for Cleveland Better Home Town** was formed. 11 year Old Connor Smith is the Vice-Chairman of the Junior Board, and 11 year old Aida Alonso is the secretary/treasurer. Connor's father is a White County Fire Fighter and Paramedic and is the Deputy Director of White County Emergency Management. Aida's father works for the Georgia Army National Guard and has served two tours in Iraq. "These three children are the reason we do what we do," said Garrison Baker, Chairman of the Board for Cleveland Better Home Town. "If we are not making Cleveland a better place to live for our children, then who are we doing this for?"

The Junior Board is hosting the Kids Area on the Square made up of fun activities that include a bungee jump, bounce house, rock wall and giant slide. They will be selling popcorn, cotton candy and snow cones to help raise money for some of the projects the Junior Board will be undertaking this year. Our local public safety agencies will also be distributing information and almost 30 arts & crafts will be on the Square.

Cleveland Better Home Town also wanted to pay special tribute to a fallen hero, Sgt. Jason Harkins, who died in Iraq while proudly serving his country. The organization teamed up with the Caring Hands Health Clinic and is hosting the **"Tribute to Heroes Ride for Freedom in Memory of Sgt. Jason Harkins."**

The motorcycle ride (poker run) will begin with registration at 8am at the Roy Ash Building in Cleveland. Sgt. Jason Harkins father, Bob Harkins, will be participating in the run. He will be riding with the Georgia State Troopers who have graciously agreed to escort the riders on the 100 mile run through the North Georgia Mountains. Proceeds from the Tribute to Heroes Ride will benefit the Caring Hands Health Clinic in Cleveland. The ride is being made possible by the generous support of GunBroker.com, the presenting sponsor of the poker run.

The Agri-Fest and Country Market, a popular event of the Fall Festival is being coordinated by the Chamber of Commerce and its Agri-Business Committee. This area, located behind the White County Courthouse will include live animals, agriculture displays a county market where you can purchase the best produce White County has to offer and of course, Cow Patty Bingo. The Agri-Fest and County Market is sponsored by United Community Bank.

Cleveland Better Home Town is a Nationally Accredited Main Street Program and is proud to host the 2nd Annual Fall Leaf Festival and we invite the public to join us for a day of family fun in Historic Downtown Cleveland as we honor our public safety men and women, as well as our military heroes.

For information call (706) 969-3336 or visit: www.clevelandbetterhometown.org

###