

# 2008 Pine Tree Festival and Southeast Timber Expo—"The Best Ever!"

**T**he 2008 Pine Tree Festival and Southeast Timber Expo was a tremendous success. Over 7,000 people attended the two weeks of activities held in Swainsboro and Emanuel County, Ga, the largest crowd this event has ever pulled.

Starting on April 26th, the festival began with its annual beauty pageants sponsored by the Swainsboro Rotary Club. In addition to the annual flower show, Pine Tree bicycle race, and golf tournament, this year's Festival Foundation Committee introduced a new "Southeast Timber Expo" venue.

Located at the Swainsboro/Emanuel County Recreation Department, the "Expo" activities included forest management equipment displays, antique cars, forestry and wildlife educational exhibits, arts and crafts, helicopter water drops, and

living history demonstrations. Participating in the event were Magnolia Springs State Park & Bo Ginn Aquarium/Aquatic Education Center, Georgia Forestry Association, Georgia Forestry Commission, Jesup City Police, Swainsboro Fire Department, East Georgia College, Swainsboro Technical College, Shriners Hospital, Center For Wildlife Education & Lamar Q. Ball Jr. Raptor Center at Georgia Southern University, and other educational displays, exhibits and demonstrations.

The "EXPO" kicked off on Wednesday May 7th, hosting this year's state FFA Forestry Field Day. Over 200 students from schools gathered for the competition. Also introduced, was Fred Scheer's Lumberjack Show from Wisconsin. The shows, held each day, were highly entertaining making this year's event "one to remember."

In downtown Swainsboro, activities included the 62nd annual parade which had over 80 entries lasting well over one hour. Also featured in the downtown area

was WXRS Battle of the Bands, grill-off, aerobic plane, children's rides, and Saturday night Art stroll.

At the event, Governor Perdue signed the Georgia Forest Land Protection Act of 2008, HB 1211, also known as the Timber Tax Relief Bill. While Governor Perdue was in town to sign the bill, he also attended the Pine Tree Festival and planted the 2008 Arbor Day tree for the city of Swainsboro. The tree that he planted was a ceremonial silver maple that was given to the City of Swainsboro by Yardmaster.

The Pine Tree Festival was first held in May 1946. Originally, the Swainsboro Kiwanis Club sponsored the event. Oversight for the Festival and Expo now lies with Swainsboro Festival Foundation, Inc., composed of some 20 community organizations.

Plans are now underway for the 2009 Festival and Expo slated for April 25- May 9. ❖



*Governor Sonny Perdue along with members of the Swainsboro Pine Tree Festival Committee. L to R: Rodney Kellum, Johnny Payne, Rep. Butch Parrish, Anthony Farris, Butch Frye, Governor Sonny Perdue, Milton Grey (sunglasses far back), Athen Walden, Doug Chassereau, Carole Yeomans, Dr. John Black, Clay Hall, George Elder, Mayor Charles Schawbe, Bill Rogers.*