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churches are expected to take part in the Trunk-or-Treat event passing out free candy and other concession favorites from the trunks of their decorated vehicles.

The Ridges is still looking for businesses and other organizations to participate. For more details on how to be a part of the celebration, call (706) 896-9707, extension 3216 to reserve a Trunk-or-Treat spot.

The idea is for local businesses, civic groups and churches to decorate the trunks of their respective vehicles in fall themes to give out holiday candy to children. Businesses, churches and civic groups are welcome to advertise them-

selves on their vehicles and pass out items that will help attract locals to their establishments.

Prizes will be awarded to the best decorated Trunk-or-Treat vehicle.

Once the event gets underway, children go from trunk-to-trunk (or bed, for those with a pick-up truck) collecting treats from all those partaking in the event. Parents have the opportunity to admire the decorations and visit with neighbors.

Hooper said Trunk-or-Treat is a sure-fire way to get your business recognized by the hundreds of children and their families that come to celebrate the occasion.

"It's been a success every year," said Hooper. "Of course this is a special time at the Resort. We're able to include a lot of different games and entertainment for children and their families here on the grounds."

In addition to Trunk-or-Treat, there also will be lots of activities to join in at this year's celebration including lake tours, barbecue, costume contests, hay rides, music, S'mores, and more. There will be Cornhole competitions again this year, Hooper said.

"It's become a tradition for us here at The Ridges and we hope to continue that," Hooper said.

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almost floor-length hair, and it seemed to give a show of its own by swaying and blowing with the music and fans overhead.

On Sunday, the Isaacs, the Mark Trammell Trio and The Melody Boys will perform, Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds General Manager Hilda Thomason said.

"It's going to be an exciting time," she said. "And we're offering helicopter rides that allow folks to get a real bird's eye view of the fall foliage."

The festival also includes the crafts that make Northeast Georgia special along with another 2010 feature, the Live Shark Show.

A Live Shark Encounter Diver swims with sharks doing natural activity. The sharks are on display at all times, including educational information throughout the show.

"It's a chance for our visitors to experience something new and exciting," Thomason said.

And for those whose feet are literally killing them, event scooters are available for rent again this year.

"The event scooters will be available throughout the entire Fall Festival," Thomason said.

As for the music lovers, John Conlee, Janie Fricke, T.G. Sheppard and Crystal Gayle are just the tip of the iceberg. Thomason said that the Fall Festival's music lineup could be one of the greatest of all time.

Percy Sledge, Connie Smith, Marty Stuart and of course our own Fiddlin' Howard Cunningham and the Appalachian Tunesmiths are signed up to entertain the masses.

And on Oct. 15 and 16,

the Georgia Fiddler's Convention takes center stage at Anderson Music Hall, Thomason said.

Sixteen-year-old Bryan McDowell, of Canton, NC took home last year's title of Georgia Mountain Fiddle King. He also accumulated an impressive number of First Place plaques in the categories of mandolin, flat-pick Guitar, and junior fiddler.

Once again, the competition includes senior fiddler, junior fiddler, Bluegrass band, finger style guitar, flat-pick guitar, banjo, and mandolin, Thomason said.

"This could be among the most exciting Fall Festivals ever," Thomason said. "We're excited and looking forward to nine wonderful days of fun, food, crafts and musical entertainment," she said.

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that something like this could fall together.

"Persistence pays off," Commissioner Kendall said.

What paid off was the use of flyover LiDAR technology by the USGS to develop a more accurate flood plain map.

With a packed courthouse full of interested residents, the proposed flood plain map for the purpose of Flood Insurance Study (FIS) and a Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map (DFIRM) for Lake Chatuge was unveiled.

The good news: the use of high-tech digital data helped remove 117 homes in the city of Hiawassee from the lake's historic flood plain.

In the end, approximately 300 or so homes total were taken out of the flood plain, Commissioner Kendall said.

"We certainly believe that this more accurate map will save local homeowners millions of dollars over the long haul," Commissioner Kendall said.

Until Commissioner Kendall requested the use of high-tech LiDAR data to develop a more accurate flood plain map, FEMA was prepared to use inaccurate data to prepare the Flood Plain Map for Chatuge.

During public hearings earlier this year, FEMA admitted that the flood maps currently in use for Chatuge were just a best estimate and not highly accurate.

The acquisition and use of high tech LiDAR flyover data saved county taxpayers thousands of dollars that they would have been spent on flood insurance had the county been forced to submit to the use of the inaccurate data.

The flyover didn't cost Towns County taxpayers a dime.

It was covered by USGS, a deal negotiated by Towns County native and Georgia Mountains Regional Commission employee Faith Jones.

"We owe Faith Jones a great deal for everything she has done to help protect her hometown," Commissioner Kendall said.

A proposed flood plain map for Chatuge was due in September. FEMA granted Commissioner Kendall a delay in the time the proposed flood map was to be prepared to allow for the LiDAR flyover.

"We appreciate your cooperation in this matter as well as your willingness to assist the state and FEMA in updating Towns County's flood map to reflect the most accurate flood risk," said Collis Brown, state Flood Plain Management Coordinator.

"It is the primary objective of the state and FEMA to update Georgia's flood maps to accurately reflect current flood risks using the most accurate data available," Brown said.

It was an unlikely happy ending to what was once a horror story for homeowners living near Lake Chatuge.

"It's believed that this is the first time that the local, state and federal government have ever worked together to accomplish something of this magnitude," Commissioner Kendall said.

Over the years, homeowners along Lake Chatuge have spent thousands and thousands of hard-earned dollars to pay for mandated flood insurance because their homes were listed as being in the lake's flood plain.

"The most important thing was that we wanted flood plain maps that accurately reflected the flood plain in Towns County," Commissioner Kendall said. "What unfolded was purely a stroke of luck and managed to reflect just how inaccurate the existing flood plain maps truly were."

"(FEMA) gave us a July 1 deadline to gather the data we needed and we met that deadline on July 1," Commissioner Kendall said.

"Accurate LiDAR data was imperative in the preparation of a revised Digital Flood Insurance

Rate Map for Towns County," Commissioner Kendall said. "A rather satisfying resolve evolved from this frustration for everyone involved."

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to spare," Kendall said. "We're living in hard times and hard times call for prudent measures on behalf of government. We won't raise taxes for sure."

Commissioner Kendall approves an advertisement

of the 5-year tax levy on Tuesday morning.

State law requires two public hearings.

The Towns County Board of Education recently approved its millage rate, which remained the same at

4.784 mills.

"The Board of Education whole-heartedly agrees with Commissioner Kendall, now is not the time to raise taxes," said Towns County Schools Superintendent Dr. Richard Behrens.