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PIGEON FORGE ROLLS OUT THE MULTI-COLORED AUTUMN CARPET

Fall visitor season filled with special activities; city offers vacation savings tips

PIGEON FORGE, Tenn. (September 2006) – Under the banner of the 10th Annual Pigeon Forge Harvest Festival, Pigeon Forge marks the change of seasons with citywide autumn decorations, festivals and crafts shows – all set against the backdrop of the colorful leaves in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Visitors know something special is going on just by viewing the array of decorative displays that use pumpkins, mums, cornstalks, hay bales, scarecrows and other elements to set an autumn tone.

Businesses throughout this city of 5,400 residents (and 11 million visitors) design and erect the displays, and it's impressive enough that the overall festival is one of the Southeast Tourism Society's Top 20 Events for September.

Among the special events on tap:

+ Dollywood's Bluegrass & BBQ Festival (Sept. 15-27) mixes mountain music and some of the region's best food. Among the performers are Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder, Ralph Stanley and the Clinch Mountain Boys, the Del McCoury Band and Cherryholmes.

+ Dollywood's National Gospel and Harvest Celebration (Sept. 29-Oct. 28) offers four weeks of gospel concerts and visiting craftsmen. Among the gospel groups are the McKameys, Gold City, Karen Peck and New River, and the Florida Boys.

+ The Rotary Club Crafts Festival (Sept. 30-Oct. 29) draws craftsmen and craft demonstrators from across the Southeast for a month of activities at Patriot Park. Local Rotarians staff the festival, and proceeds benefit numerous charities.

+ Even more craftsmen are in town for the Sixth Annual Fall Harvest Art & Craft Show (Oct. 13-15 and 20-22) at Belz Factory Outlet World.

The festivals and special events complement the city's many entertainment shows at more than a dozen theaters and shopping at its six outlet malls and numerous craft and specialty stores.

Pigeon Forge's tourism officials note that weekends usually are busier than weekdays and that observant consumers can find various ways to stretch their vacation budgets. Among their suggestions:

1. Save gasoline while in town by riding the Fun Time Trolley (only 50 cents a ride).
2. Pick up a free Pigeon Forge Value Card (discounts on lodging, entertainment, restaurants, shopping and attractions) at the Pigeon Forge Welcome Center at Traffic Light #0 near the Miracle Theater and WonderWorks.
3. Look for new discounts on the Web at the tourism department's official Web site: www.MyPigeonForge.com.
4. Enjoy a free day at Dollywood, where the "Arrive After 3, Get the Next Day Free" program is a visitor favorite (valid through Oct. 27).
5. Get a theater combo. There are more than 20 different shows, and many offer discounted combo tickets if you want to see more than one.
6. Buy a vacation package. "Packages save you money. It's as simple as that," said Director of Tourism Leon Downey of programs that combine lodging, shows and attractions into one purchase. Numerous packages are available at www.MyPigeonForge.com.
7. Enjoy Great Smoky Mountains National Park. "The national park is our tourism anchor, and it's free," Downey said. It is America's most visited national park and the largest wilderness area in the eastern U.S. Easy hiking trails, picnic grounds and magnificent scenery are adjacent to Pigeon Forge.
8. Play the Pigeon Forge Great Gas Giveaway online game. You might win \$30 of gas for your trip to the Smokies (www.MyPigeonForge.com).

Information about all aspects of Pigeon Forge is on the Web at www.MyPigeonForge.com or by calling toll free to 800-251-9100.

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