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## Thousands visit Peanut Festival in Williston; *Royalty crowned*



**Peanut Festival Queen Sabri Jones accepts her trophy from Miss Williston Teresa Fernandez.**

### **Story and Photos**

**By Terry Witt, Senior Reporter**

**© Oct. 7, 2018 at 3:38 p.m.**

**WILLISTON --** The 30th Annual North Central Florida Peanut Festival attracted a crowd estimated at 3,000 to 4000 Saturday. The midway at Heritage Park was packed with visitors all day.

**Baby Peanut Queen  
Ember Rose Perry and  
Baby Peanut King  
Jameson Green enjoy  
their moment of fame.**



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The Peanut Queen and her Court are shown. They are (from left) third runner-up Bella Hachman, second runner-up Abigail Kalback, first runner-up Alee Grace Rizer, Queen Sabri Jones and outgoing Queen McKinley Peck.



Baby Peanut Queen Ember Rose Perry on the far right is pictured with her court. They are (from left) third runner-up Caelyn Coblentz, second runner-up Marley Jo Price, first runner-up Emery Jewel Cain and Queen Ember Rose Perry.

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**The Baby King and his court are shown. They are (from left) third runner-up Kellan Dwayne Lee Gaitlin, second runner-up Hunter Reed Schmitz, first runner-up Avery Carter Grimes and King Jameson Green.**



**Kayla Reguerio and Payton Lewellyn of the Levy County Sheriff's Office Explorers sell food items as a fundraiser. Reguerio is a criminal justice technology major at the College of Central Florida. Lewellyn is a member of the Honor Guard.**

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**Levy County Republican Party members Sally Ann Collins, Nancy Lampka, Tyler Gardner, George Lambka and Butch Lemery were part of a colorful red, white and blue booth to promote the party.**



**Levy County Democratic Party members Harriet Jones, Drollene Brown and Peggi Young promote the party with brochures and pamphlets.**

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**Williston Fire Rescue sold cancer awareness t-shirts to raise funds that support local cancer victims. They answered calls when they weren't in the booth. They are (from left) Firefighter Justin Hoeschelr,**

**Jacob Campbell, son of Firefighter Ken Maddox (not shown), Lt. Thomas Rachford and Public Relations Officer Danny Wallace.**

**American Legion Auxiliary representatives including District President Bet Chavous, Post 58 President Nancy President, are joined by Gainesville Post 16 member Michele McCarthy and Post 237 member Rebecca Kelly of Beverly Hills raising awareness of homelessness among female veterans. They said two years ago they found housing for five homeless female veterans,**

**some of whom had children. Kelly is there public relations person. "We are the American Legion Auxiliary and we are nuts about our vets," Kelly said.**



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**John Gray, president and chief executive officer of Williston Peanut, and Tyron Spearman, representing Buying Point, were giving away delicious fried peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.**

Sponsored by the Williston Chamber of Commerce, the park was home to 125 vendor booths stretching for more than 300 yards.

The Baby Peanut King and Queen competition and the Peanut Queen contest filled the Heritage Park Pavilion.

Jameson Green was crowned the Baby Peanut King and Ember Rose Perry the Baby Peanut Queen.

Avery Carter Grimes was first runner-up for Baby Peanut King, Hunter Reed Schmitz second runner-up and Kellen Dewayne Lee Gaitlin third runner-up.

Emery Jewel Cain was first runner-up, Marley Jo Price second runner-up and Caelyn Coblentz third runner up.

Sabri Jones was crowned Peanut Queen, Allee Grace Rizer first runner up, Abigail Kalback second runner-up and Bella Hachman third runner-up.

There were no contestants for Peanut King.

Visitor traffic at the festival seemed move smoother along the midway this year.

Chamber President Marc Pompeo said he changed the way the vendor booths were situated to give people more green space for walking around traffic on the sidewalk and for visiting with vendor booths.

Children enjoyed riding the ponies and choo choo train. Pompeo said there was no bounce house because the vendors expressing interest in the festival wanted the chamber to rent the bounce houses, which wasn't within the chamber's means.

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He said next year the chamber hopes to find a vendor to operate the bounce house and perhaps charge a small entry fee for children to use the attraction.

Pompeo said the festival has outgrown the available space at Heritage Park. He said the chamber gave up the portion of Heritage Park where the Veterans Memorial is now located.

He said there is additional Heritage Park space beyond the gazebo but the chamber would need city approval to use those areas.

Pompeo added that a number of vendors expressed interest in making the festival a two-day event. He said the city also would have to give approval for a two-day festival. He realizes adding a day would increase costs. Police would have to provide security for the second day.