HISTORY OF THE SWEET POTATO FESTIVAL

The Sweet Potato Festival began as a fund raising idea of the Jacksonville Community Commission. The Commission itself was formed in September of 1991 out of shared concerns of citizens of the Jacksonville Community. The commission desired to improve the community through youth development, assistance to senior citizens, and renovations and upkeep of the community and its facilities such as the Historic Jacksonville School.

In early 1992, the idea of fund raising was suggested as a means of assisting the newly formed Jacksonville Community Commission in carrying out its mission of improving the Jacksonville community. After several meetings, it was decided that the Sweet Potato Festival would be presented as an annual event. The Sweet Potato was chosen as a symbol for ~he festival because it is known as a part of Southern culture, Southern People, and Southern Cuisine. How many of us don't smile when we think of days gone by when we used to eat Grandma's Sweet Potato Pie? The first festival was held o~ the first Saturday of November in 1992 in the Historic Jacksonville Community Park. Due to overwhelming support from the citizens of the Jacksonville Community, the Midland Valley Area and the CSRA, the first festival was deemed a great success!

Due to colder weather in November, the Commission decided to move the festival to the first Saturday in October 1994. The Jacksonville Community Commission also registered the Sweet Potato Festival with the South Carolina Festival Association. In 1995, the festival was moved to the third Saturday in October of each year. This has remained as the permanent date. As we continue to celebrate the Sweet Potato Festival each year, we rejoice and are grateful for those who have given of themselves through tireless dedication, support, and hard work. The Jacksonville Community Commission looks forward to continuing to make a positive impact throughout the Midland Valley Area, the CSRA, and the United States!

THANK YOU!