

Keep Aiken Green

Aiken plans celebration for Earth Day

BY COLIN DEMAREST
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Editor's note: This article is part of series called Keep Aiken Green, a recycling awareness and education project in cooperation with the City of Aiken and the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control.

Aiken's largest everything-environment celebration is less than a month away, and those behind the effort are busy tying up loose ends.

"Everything's coming together," said Ron Dellamora, the chairman of Aiken's Energy & Environmental Committee. "Everything is planned and organized, and now it's just a matter of get-



STAFF FILE PHOTO BY DEDE BILES

Lizzy Lewis, left, and her mother, Margie Lewis go on the Family Bicycle Ride during last year's Earth Day celebration in Aiken.

ting it done."

"We're down to the short strokes," he added.

The Energy & Environmental Committee, alongside a throng of volunteers,

is in charge of the festival known as Earth Day Aiken.

Earth Day Aiken 2017 welcomed roughly 2,000 visitors. That year, a drone captured footage of the event.

This year, Dellamora expects an even larger turnout. "We have our most sponsors ever, our most exhibitors ever," Dellamora said, "and we think we have our broadest digital campaign."

The celebration is scheduled for April 21 in and around The Alley and Newberry Street.

The Earth Day celebration will feature a string of guest speakers, vendors, a family bike ride, guided hikes through Hitchcock

Woods and more. Dellamora said Aiken's Earth Day had been "held in Hitchcock Woods forever," and, thus, the small-group tours were only appropriate.

This year's extravaganza – one Dellamora said was designed to be a "festival location open to the entire city" – marks the fourth year of local Earth Day celebrations in this form.

Aiken was the first city in South Carolina to recycle, according to Dellamora. The City marked its 25th recycling anniversary three years ago, he said.

Earth Day is a landmark for the birth of the environmental movement. The celebration's roots can be traced

back to April 1970 when more than 20 million people demonstrated and brought attention to the importance of environmentally friendly lifestyles and choices.

Earth Day will turn 50 in 2020.

For more information, visit earthdayaiken.org.

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