

Gunfighters in Waynoka



There's a gunfight in Waynoka every year as the Dog Creek Gunfighters put on a show for visitors to the Cimarron River Stampede Rodeo. (cnhi photo by Johnny McMahan/Woodward News)

WAYNOKA (cnhi) – What started out as a one-time centennial celebration performance turned into a 20-year legacy.

Two decades ago, Mike Marsalis was contacted to bring together a skit for Waynoka's centennial. As a result, the theater buff created the Dog Creek Gunfighters and the rest is history.

"What was supposed to be a one-time thing has led to hundreds of performances all over the state," Marsalis said. "We perform skits and street shows and hold 30 to 40 performances a year."

Marsalis said at least 50 people have been involved with the Gunfighters at one point or another. In August the group will have a 20-year reunion at the Waynoka Cimarron River Stampede Rodeo to celebrate all the laughter shared throughout the years.

The eight- to 10-man crew will also perform at the

Northwestern Oklahoma State University homecoming and the Fairview Threshing Bee.

Marsalis directs, stars and composes the skits with the input of the cast members.

"We have a really good crew right now," he said. "They know what kind of performance the other men will do and it always turns out to be a lot of fun."

At times during a performance, the gussied-up cast is accompanied by saloon girls and other Old West characters. Regular performers include Marsalis as John Leroy Petersmith, an old, nearly blind cowboy, "Doc," a famous card shark, Clay the deputy and Sam the bartender.

The crew keeps safety in mind with all the stunt work involved. Stunt work was easier 20 years ago, Marsalis said, but they still love to do it. Some of the best performances are seen during the night

shows the Gunfighters hold, he said.

"With the black powder we use," he said, "You should see the sparks and fire coming from those old guns."

Justice is always served in the skits, street shows and gunfights, he said. Whether it be a gunfight or the occasional hanging, the good guys always win.

"I recommend people see our performance," he said. "It's not every day that grown men get to play cowboys."

Cimarron River Stampede is Aug. 12-14. Waynoka Dog Creek Gunfighters performance on Aug. 14 is free. For more information: Waynoka Chamber of Commerce, 580-824-4741.

By Rayna Merkle Woodward News

Lake Eufaula gentle giant

EUFAULA (cnhi) – With warm waves and beckoning beaches, the gentle giant is welcoming you to Southeast Oklahoma.

Lake Eufaula, at a staggering 102,500 acres of water, is number 15 on the list of largest man-made lakes in the United States. The lake is so filled with fish that it has been named one of Oklahoma's Top 25 Bass Lakes - coming in at number seven.

Each bass caught in the lake averages 2.37 pounds, according to a roundup of information from the more than 1,000 bass fishing tournaments held each year. And, even more important, probably, is that three-fourths of the people who are fishing for bass catch at least one.

But even if no fish are caught it's still nice to wet a pole, kick back and just enjoy the peace and quiet. All summer long anglers can be seen - well, not exactly the anglers, but their vehicles - can be seen parked along the roadway, their drivers having hiked down an incline and thrown out a pole or two.

Fishing is not only a summertime activity at Lake Eufaula. There is a heated boat dock at the Lake Eufaula Marina for winter fishing.

Also during the winter, visitors to Lake Eufaula's many coves and parks can see buffalo and elk, visit the nature centers and enjoy trail rides on horses. For trail ride information call 918-490-0192.

Boating, swimming, hiking, hunting, golfing, watching wildlife and picnicking are all family-friendly activities available on or near the lake.

While at the marina, lake-goers can rent jet skis, wave runners and pontoon boats. A tour through the gift shop is sure to turn up a present or two for the people who aren't getting to experience all the fun the lake has to offer.

To get to the marina (and the gift shop) from Interstate 40, go south on U.S. Hwy. 69 about seven miles, then turn west onto Texanna Road. The park entrance is two miles down Texanna Road.

Other facilities at Lake Eufaula include marinas, boat ramps, picnic areas, swim beaches, tent and RV campsites, cabins, group shelters, restrooms, showers, drinking water, and an enclosed fishing dock.

As a well-known tournament lake, Lake Eufaula draws anglers

from across the nation to test their skills at catching largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, Kentucky bass, crappie, catfish, sand bass and other species. Stripers can be caught beneath the dam and often reach enormous lengths.

Along with fishing, there are public hunting areas consisting of more than 31,800 acres offering deer, bobwhite quail, cottontail rabbits, squirrels, ducks, geese and mourning doves.

Although water recreation is the focus of the Lake Eufaula area today, it still conveys its historic aura - from the pre-1900 downtown Eufaula business district and the Katy Railroad, which played a role in the colorful history surrounding such notorious characters as Belle Starr, the Youngers and the James brothers, to Standing Rock. The rock was a landmark that stood 63 feet above the Canadian River and was regarded by early explorers and residents as a prime fishing spot. Today Standing Rock is beneath the water of Lake Eufaula.

By Susan Woolsey McAlester News-Capital &

FACTS:

Lake Eufaula is filled with fish, including:

- bass - largemouth, smallmouth, Kentucky and sports
- catfish - caught with rods and reels, jugline and trot lines
- crappie - fish from the bank or while on a boat. Each summer there is a Crappiefest, a tagged tournament that lasts two months and nets anglers money.
- stripers - love the swift-moving water beneath Eufaula Dam. The dam is on the South Canadian River, close to the town of Webbers Falls.

Activities at the lake are numerous. If you're interested in being sprawled out on the beach soaking up the sun, swimming, wakeboarding, skiing, hiking the shores of the lake, golfing, riding a horse or camping out, Lake Eufaula offers it all.

To set up tee-times for golfing, call toll free (866) 602-GOLF. For horseback riding, call (918) 490-0192.



A wakeboarder takes to the sky during the annual Southern Plains Festival on Lake Eufaula. (cnhi photo by Kevin Harvison/McAlester News-Capital & Democrat)

ALABASTER CAVERNS STATE PARK

LOCATION: Six miles south of Freedom on highway 50

HOURS: Office open from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. year round. Closed Thanksgiving and Christmas. Tours available May 1 through Sept. 30 from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. every hour. Tours available Oct. 1 through April 30 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. every hour.

ADMISSION: \$6 for adults age 13 and older, youth ages 12 through 6 \$3 and ages 5 and under are free.

ATTRACTIONS: Camping for RVs \$15 per night, tent camping \$8 per night and cave camping \$45 per night. Gift shop, hiking trails and wild caving offered. Wild cave permit is \$5 per person and equipment is available for use.

CONTACT: (580) 621-3381

PLAINS INDIANS AND PIONEERS MUSEUM

LOCATION: 2009 Williams Ave. Woodward

HOURS: Open Tuesday through Saturday 10 a.m. until 5 p.m.

ADMISSION: Donation

ATTRACTIONS: Original Sod House, murals, ag and Native American history

CONTACT: (580) 256-6136

SHATTUCK WINDMILL MUSEUM

LOCATION: Junction of Hwy. 283 and Hwy. 15 in Shattuck

HOURS: Open every day of the week, sunup to sundown

ATTRACTIONS: 39 vintage windmills, one wind generator, a reconstructed half-dugout of local caliche rock furnished as it might have been in 1900 and a one-story farmhouse.

CONTACT: (580) 938-2818

LITTLE SAHARA STATE PARK

LOCATION: Three miles south of Waynoka on U.S. Highway 281

HOURS: Dunes open all hours during entire year. Gift shop 8 a.m. until 4 p.m.

ADMISSION: \$7 a day per driver in dunes

ATTRACTIONS: RV camping \$16 a day with hook-up. Tent camping \$8 a day. Tours available from Little Sahara Tours - \$20 for adults, \$15 for children 12 and under.

CONTACT: (580) 824-1417

FORT SUPPLY HISTORIC SITE

LOCATION: Highway 270, Fort Supply

NOTEWORTHY: Fort Supply established in 1868 for a winter campaign against Southern Plains tribes. Five remaining buildings from that era have been restored and listed on National Register of Historic Places. The site features artifacts, photographs and graphics that tell the story of the fort.

CONTACT: (580) 766-3767



Spiking the horizon northeast of Woodward is Oklahoma's first wind farm. As power companies harness the state's boundless wind energy for electricity, passersby are drawn to the distinctive towering turbines visible for miles. (cnhi photo/Woodward News)

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