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From bucking broncos to pony rides and everything in between, there will be no shortage of excitement and entertainment at the 23rd Annual Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo.

This year's rodeo is action packed and fun for the whole family. With your traditional rodeo events like bull riding, calf roping and barrel racing will also come a few specialty acts.

See the graceful and dynamic Crossfire Cowgirls Rodeo Drill Team in action. Have some laughs with rodeo clown Brian Potter. Then, watch show-stopping performance by the rodeo's headline entertainment, John Payne: The One-Arm Bandit. His exciting, world-renowned show is something that you won't want to miss.

Don't forget about the games, food and other rodeo-themed activities that will take place throughout the three-day event.

Saddle up and get ready for a great weekend of rodeo fun!



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President Mike Nelson (front, left), Secretary and Treasurer Kellie Brown, Vice President Tim Murphy, and James Olin. Dale Peeler (back, left), Gator Moore, Rob Summerall and Lamar Boozer.

Columbia County Resources, organizers of the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo, is a private, nonprofit organization established in 1959. The general nature and objective of Columbia County Resources, Inc. is to provide a program of activities with the people of the county to further develop education, agriculture, horticulture, livestock and other resources of Columbia County. The first Columbia County Fair was held in 1938. Fairs were not conducted from 1941–1953 due to the outbreak and aftermath of World War II but were resumed in 1954 at the urging of County Extension Agent Neal Dukes.

Columbia County Resources contributes to and provides support for the local 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) programs, Take Stock in Children, Parents United Together, Kiwanis, Shrine Club, Boys & Girls Club, Senior Services, CHS Band, Dugout Club, Muscular Dystrophy and Florida Sheriff's Youth Ranch. The complex is used as a staging area by Florida Power and Light and the Forestry Service in times of disaster. Two scholarships are provided annually throughout the local high schools. Columbia County Resources annually hosts the Columbia County Fair, Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo, Tough Enough to Wear Pink and Smokin' Pig Fest BBQ Cook Off. Our website, www.ColumbiaCountyFair.org, keeps a current schedule of events along with information about each event.





A BARREL OF LAUGHS

Rodeo Clown Brian Potter

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY
Photos by Scott Reed/Pro Rodeo Media

After getting his start in professional rodeo as a barrel man and bull fighter, rodeo clown Brian Potter has become one of the most sought-after comedy acts in the business. Soon, he will be returning to his Florida roots to entertain and delight the crowds at the 23rd Annual Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo.

Potter grew up riding bulls and horses in Pasco County, Fla. He has been in the rodeo business since 1988 as a competitor, bull fighter and barrel man. In 2001, he began his career as a rodeo clown, and hasn't stopped making people laugh since.

"Years ago bull fighters also did comedy," Potter said. "That's how I got started. The comedy just took over."

The PRCA rodeo clown entertains his audience while taking on different personas, including "Motocross Mike" and "Redneck Fireworks." He also performs acts featuring "Hershey – The Driving Horse" and has mastered the art of "walk and talk."

Potter entertains crowds across North America throughout most of the year, working as an equine dentist in Alabama during the off season. His success has afforded him the opportunity to be selected twice for the Turquoise Circuit Finals, the South Eastern Circuit Finals and the Wilderness Circuit Finals.

Although he has displayed his comedy chops at rodeos from California to

Canada, he is excited to perform at the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo and get back to the state he grew up in.

"Most of the work I do is mid to north west now," Potter said. "I don't get to go south very often so I'm very excited to come to Lake City."

According to Potter, his favorite thing about being a rodeo clown is getting to entertain the crowd and make them smile.

"My job is to fill in between events so the best thing is to absolutely make someone smile," Potter said. "We don't want anyone getting bored between acts so it's my job to entertain."

With his strong arena presence and his natural ability to get up close and personal with the crowd, Potter will ensure that spectators at the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo will be engaged and entertained throughout the entire rodeo performance.

Potter will also perform at the Southeastern Pro Rodeo in Ocala on March 24-25 before traveling back to Newville, Ala.



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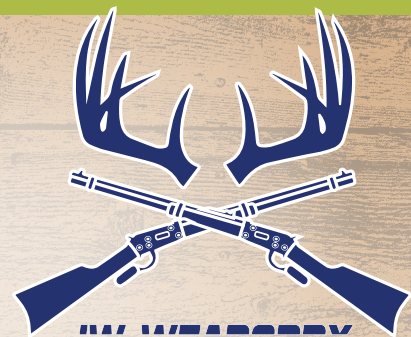
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Bringing Back the Bandit

John Payne, aka 'One Arm Bandit,' will be the featured entertainment at the rodeo

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

One of the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo's most highly-anticipated acts is back this year. John Payne aka the "One Arm Bandit" will be back in the arena performing his trilling and dangerous act.

This 15-time Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association "Specialty Act of the Year" will load up his pink mustangs and zebra stallions and head on down to Lake City to perform in the Pro Rodeo.

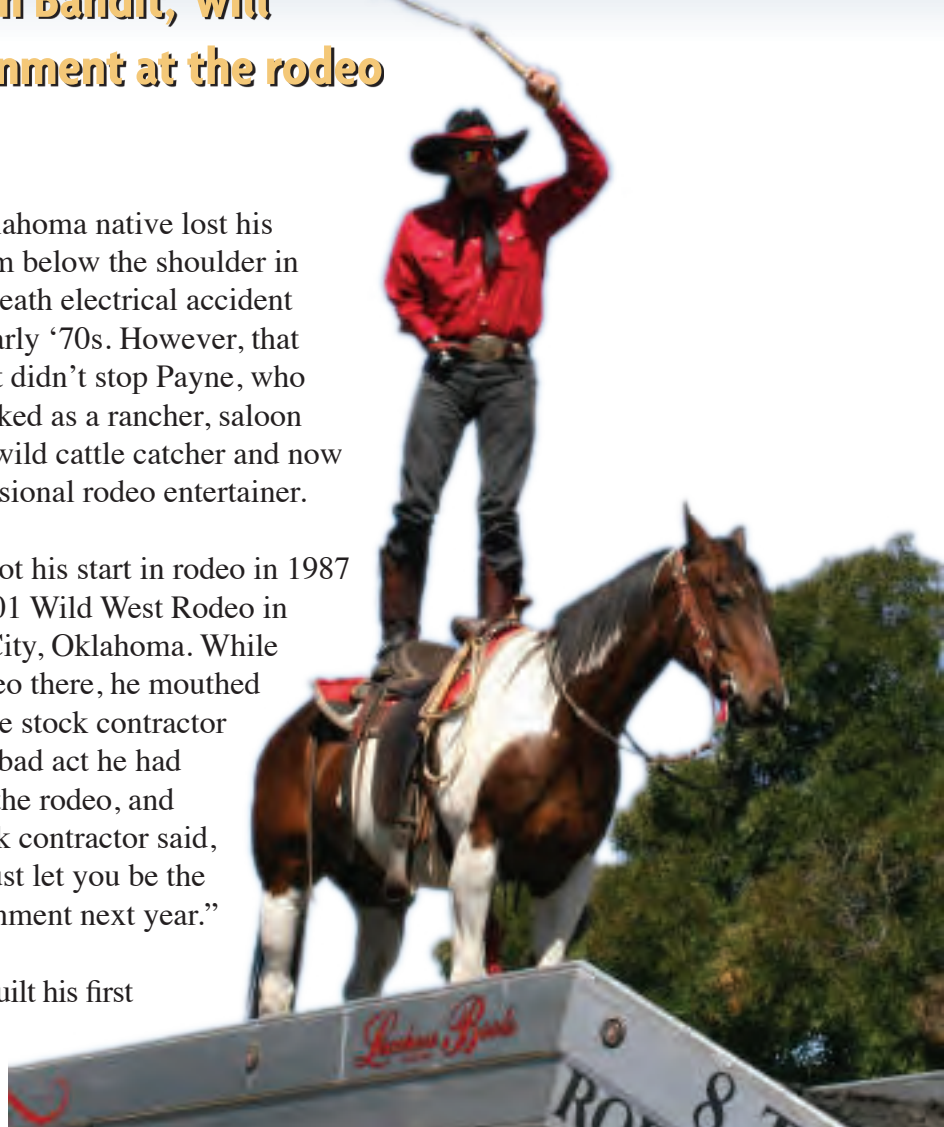
"It's the best rodeo entertainment you'll see" Payne said.

Payne calls himself the "One Arm Bandit" and with one hand he can crack a bull whip while steering a horse with his legs.

The Oklahoma native lost his right arm below the shoulder in a near-death electrical accident in the early '70s. However, that accident didn't stop Payne, who has worked as a rancher, saloon owner, wild cattle catcher and now a professional rodeo entertainer.

Payne got his start in rodeo in 1987 at the 101 Wild West Rodeo in Ponca City, Oklahoma. While at a rodeo there, he mouthed off to the stock contractor about a bad act he had seen at the rodeo, and the stock contractor said, "Well just let you be the entertainment next year."

So, he built his first trailer



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from scratch and bought his first truck from his brother for \$800. In his first show, he put five Corriente steers on top of his trailer with the help of Blackmouth Cur dogs. Ever since, he's been entertaining crowds all over the country with his act.

Payne has been performing in the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo for at least 20 years, and usually comes and wows the crowd with his act every three years. And every time he comes to town, his show does not disappoint.

Payne uses several different animals in his shows, including Longhorn Watusi steers,

mustangs, mules and buffalo along with Blackmouth Cur dogs, which are an intricate part of the training process. For his show in Lake City, he will bring mustangs and zebra stallions.

When Payne rides his horse up a steep ramp to the top of a trailer, everyone in the audience will hold their breath as he completes one of the most dangerous stunts in rodeo.

"It's a little bit wild," Payne said. "There's a lot of danger in the show. It's not something Grandma would want to do."

One thing's for sure, John Payne the "One Arm Bandit" is guilty of stealing the show.



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RODEO HITS TOWN

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

There's only one place where you can witness the toughest, most exciting, wildest shows in the west, and that's at the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo.

Watch a cowboy ride a bucking bronco, tackle a steer or ride a bull. See cowgirls guide their horses around the arena, making sharp turns and thundering through the dirt. Witness one of the most exciting rodeo specialty acts in the world. Do all this and more right here in Lake City.

The 23rd Annual Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo will take place March 17-19 at the Columbia County Fairgrounds Rodeo Arena.

According to Columbia County Resources President Mike Nelson, the rodeo is an event that is highly anticipated by locals and visitors.

"Everybody looks forward to it," Nelson said.

"They're always ready to come out and see it."

Perhaps the highlight of this year's rodeo is the return of John Payne, more famously known as the "One Arm Bandit." This 15-time PRCA "Specialty Act of the Year" will be bringing his thrilling, dangerous act to Lake City, complete with exciting stunts and moments that will make you hold your breath in anticipation.

Payne, who is on rotation with the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo, comes and performs about every three years.

Last year, there were an estimated 6,000-8,000 people in attendance at the rodeo. According to Nelson, with John Payne making an appearance, that number is expected to go up.

"It probably will go up a little bit more," Nelson said. "With John Payne coming in that makes a big difference."



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ENJOY THE SHOW

HOURS

FRIDAY, 3/17: Gates open at 6 p.m.
Event begins at 7:30 p.m.

SATURDAY, 3/18: Gates open from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the Rodeo Kids Zone, free for all children with paid admission.
Show starts at 7:30 p.m.

SUNDAY, 3/19: Gates open at noon.
Show starts at 2 p.m.

ADMISSION

IN ADVANCE: Tickets are \$10 in advance, on sale at Russell's Western Wear, S&S Food Stores, the Columbia County Fairgrounds Office and the Fort White Farm and Feed Store.

AT THE GATE: Adults are \$14.
Children ages 6–12 are \$5.

Children under 5 years old get in free.
SUNDAY ONLY: All veterans and military personnel with military ID admitted free.

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Also performing at this year's Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo is Brian Potter, a rodeo clown with several different personas that will keep the crowd roaring with laughter.

"He's one of a kind," Nelson said.

On Friday the gates open at 6 p.m. and the event begins at 7:30 p.m. On Saturday, the gates open from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. for the Rodeo Kids Zone, free for all children with paid admission, and the show starts at 7:30 p.m. On Sunday, March 19, the gates will open at noon and the show starts at 2 p.m.



Admission for the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo is \$10 in advance. Tickets are on sale at Russell's Western Wear, S&S Food Stores, the Columbia County Fairgrounds Office and the Fort White Farm and Feed Store. Tickets at the gate are \$14 for adults. For children ages 6-12 the tickets are \$5 and children under 5 years old will be admitted free.

The Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo is organized by Columbia County Resources, a non-profit organization, governed by an eight-member board or directors. Columbia County Resources oversees the 86-acre Columbia County Fairgrounds complex and the rodeo arena.

Rodeo action will be centered around seven high-octane events: bareback riding, saddle bronc, barrel racing, calf roping, steer wrestling, bull riding and team roping.

The Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo is a Professional Rodeo Cowboy Association and Women's Professional Rodeo Association sanctioned event, where competitors from each of the circuits will compete for points and prize money as they vie for a championship win. The PRCA National Championship will take place in Las Vegas in December.

This year will also be the seventh open rodeo for the event, and anyone who does not have a current PRCA card or permit is allowed to



participate. In past years, there have been nearly 200 local entries.

In addition to rodeo events, Friday's show will also feature the crowning of the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo Queens during intermission.

Saturday night will serve as the Tough Enough to Wear Pink Fundraiser for breast cancer awareness.

Also on Saturday night, the Crossfire Cowgirls Rodeo Drill Team will perform a special routine, choreographed to the song "Fight Song," to honor people who are suffering from or who have suffered from various diseases, including diabetes, cancer and Alzheimer's.

"They always do an excellent job," Nelson said. "It makes the chills go down your body."

From 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. the Kids Zone will be open to children, where they can participate in a variety of rodeo-themed activities.

Sunday's events will include a salute to the armed forces. All veterans and military personnel with military ID will get in free.

For more information about the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo, contact the Columbia County Fairgrounds at (386) 752-8822 or visit www.ColumbiaCountyFair.org.



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VOICE OF THE RODEO

Award-Winning Announcer Jerry Todd

As he has in the past, announcer Jerry Todd will serve again as voice of this year's rodeo. With over three decades worth of experience as a rodeo announcer, Todd knows the sport inside and out. He has announced for many events and was voted WPRA Announcer of the Year. Todd will keep fans updated and call all the action from the back of his beautiful Medicine Hat paint horse, Twister.



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RODEO EVENTS QUICK GUIDE

Do You Know the Barrel From the Bronc?

RODEO SCHEDULE

FRIDAY Gates Open.....	6:00 p.m.
Rodeo Starts	7:30 p.m.
SATURDAY Gates Open	4:00 p.m.
Rodeo Starts	7:30 p.m.
SUNDAY Gates Open	12:00 Noon
Rodeo Starts	2:00 p.m.



STEER WRESTLING

The cowboy backs his horse in the box and waits for the calf to be released. He runs his horse up beside the calf and jumps off his horse to catch the calf, upend it and throw it on the ground.



BULL RIDING

The most dangerous of the rodeo sports, bull riding is often the most exciting event. The cowboy mounts the bull secured in the chute, secures his gloved grip on the bull's tie-down and nods his head. When the chute opens, the fun begins. The object is for the cowboy to stay on the bull for 8 seconds to earn a score.



BAREBACK RIDING

Each bareback rider brings his own equipment, which is called his "rigging." The rigging is customized to the cowboy's grip and attached to a molded piece of leather that is cinched around the horse's girth. When the chute opens, the cowboy must stay on the horse for 8 seconds.

SADDLE BRONC RIDING

This is a classic rodeo event that matches the skills of a cowboy who wants to stay on a horse to a horse that has never been saddled. Again the aim is to stay on for 8 seconds.

TIE-DOWN ROPING

(Also known as calf roping.)

The cowboy or roper backs his horse into the box. He carries a rope in one hand and a "piggin' string" in his mouth. When the cowboy nods, the gate opens and the calf runs out. The cowboy must catch the calf and tie three legs of the calf.



TEAM ROPING

This is a team event where athletic rodeo partners practice different roping skills. The front cowboy is called the "header" and his task is to rope the head of the calf. The second cowboy follows behind the calf and is the "heeler." Once the head is roped, the "heeler" ropes the rear legs of the calf to immobilize it. The event is timed and if either cowboy misses, there is no score on the run.



BARREL RACING

This is a women's event and one of the fastest moving rodeo events. A cowgirl races into the arena and circles three barrels set in a cloverleaf pattern, then races across the time line. Points are deducted for knocking over a barrel or missing a turn. The fastest score wins.





Crossfire Cowgirls

By KAYLA LOKEINSKY

The Crossfire Cowgirls will once again be lighting up the arena at this year's Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo, and they plan on igniting some serious sparks with this year's performance.

"We're planning on lighting it up this year," team founder and coach Lynne Crawford said.

The Crossfire Cowgirls, Lake City's premiere Western equestrian team, will be adding more fireworks to this

2017 CROSSFIRE COWGIRLS DRILL TEAM

Marissa Dawson (from left), Kylie Brown, Coach Lynne Crawford, Taylor Gebo, Kiaya Roberts, Laura Waites, Marsha Wallace and Lillian Lee

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PROUDLY WAVING THE FLAG

Crossfire Cowgirls team member Laura Waites waves the American flag during a performance at the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo last year.



year's shows, adding another layer of excitement to what will already be a show-stopping performance.

Since 2005, the Crossfire Cowgirls have performed complex, choreographed drills and maneuvers on horseback. However, this year's performance means a little bit more, as they honor one of their own.

A'lyce Vaughn, Crawford's daughter and a member of the first rodeo drill team in Lake City, the Columbia County Cowgirls, died this past summer at age 25 after fighting a battle with diabetes. The Crossfire Cowgirls will honor her at the Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo, dedicating their routine, choreographed to Rachel Platten's "Fight Song," to her.

"This year we want to focus the performance on honoring her," Crawford said.

During Saturday's performance at the rodeo, each of the Crossfire Cowgirls will represent a disease,



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including breast cancer, Alzheimer's and diabetes, among others. As they preform to "Fight Song," their act will remind spectators to keep fighting in the face of these diseases.

"When these girls ride that drill, oh my goodness, the passion and the drama, it's just absolutely hair raising," Crawford said. "They do such a beautiful job."

Another tribute that the Crossfire Cowgirls will be performing this year is their military tribute, where each rider will hold flags representing the

United States Military.

"That is just a drill that never gets old," Crawford said.

Crawford says the Crossfire Cowgirls are excited to put on another stellar performance at this year's Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo. The 10-member team has been practicing every weekend since the weekend after Labor Day in preparation for this season.

"They do a fantastic job," Crawford said.

2016 JUNIOR MISS RODEO QUEEN

Crossfire Cowgirls team member Lillian Lee holds the American flag during a performance. Lee was the 2016 Junior Miss Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo.





HONORING A'LYCE

Hannah Cox, A'lyce Vaughn, Bethany Cox and Jordan Spires are pictured in their drill team uniforms. A'lyce Vaughn, one of the original members of the Crossfire Cowgirls back when they were named the Columbia County Cowgirls, passed away this past summer. The Crossfire Cowgirls will honor her memory with their performance of "Fight Song" on Saturday night.



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Queens of the Rodeo

From staff reports

Before the gates open at the 23rd Annual Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo, several cowgirls will have finished competing for one of the rodeo's top honors: Rodeo Queen.

The winners of the 12th Annual Rodeo Pageant will be announced during intermission at the rodeo's opening night.

The contestants, whose ages range from 4 to 18, will be participating in four divisions: Miss Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo, Junior Miss, Little Miss and Tiny Miss.

Three judges will interview the girls on a variety of topics that are designed to show their knowledge of horses and horsemanship skills. After the interview, the girls will move on to the rodeo portion of the pageant competition.

For the younger contestants, that means physically guiding their horses in a figure-eight pattern, while older contestants will compete in a four-minute freestyle event.

A photogenic element will also be included this year, in which contestants will submit a photo of themselves to be judged.

The Miss Florida Gateway Pro Rodeo winner will receive a \$300 educational scholarship, a Montana Silversmith buckle, tiara, sash and riding halter. The first runner-up will receive a \$150 scholarship. Winners of the Junior Miss and Little Miss divisions will receive a buckle, tiara, sash and halter, while runners-up will receive a halter.



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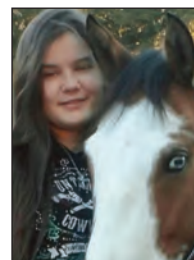
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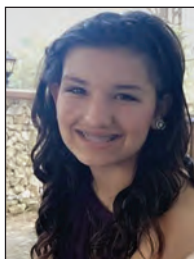
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CHUTE SPONSOR
SUWANNEE RIVER MUSIC PARK
NORTH FLORIDA GLASS
GOO GOO CAR WASH
AMERICAN PAWN BROKERS
NORTH FLORIDA LIVESTOCK MARKET
PCS

BULL RIDING
HOLLY ELECTRIC

TEAM ROPING
GRACELAND/CREATIVE CONCRETE

STEER WRESTLING
CA BOONE

TIE DOWN
ANDERSON COLUMBIA

BAREBACK/SADDLE BRONC
UTILITY TRUCKS & EQUIPMENT
& SOGGY BOTTOM BOYS EVENTS

BARREL RACING
BAYA PHARMACY

GRAND STAND SPONSOR
CAPITAL METAL SUPPLY
ACTION SIGNS AND GRAPHICS

BOOSTER SPONSOR
EPIPHANY CATHOLIC SCHOOL
O'NEAL ROOFING
O'NEAL CONTRACTING

TICKET SPONSOR
HORSESHOEING PLUS
HARDEE'S
RIGHTWAY AUTOMOTIVE

*Sponsor list provided by
Columbia County Resources.*





CHAMBER of
COMMERCE
LAKE CITY • COLUMBIA COUNTY



MARCH 25TH **2:00PM TO 6:00PM**

DARBY PAVILION AT LAKE DESOTO

\$30
DAY OF
EVENT

• **TICKETS & INFO** •
www.lakecitychamber.com
(386)752-3690

\$20
IN
ADVANCE

\$50
PRE-
PURCHASE
ONLY

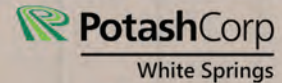
LIMITED TICKETS
VIP AREA

AVAILABLE FOR
PURCHASE ONLY
AT THE CHAMBER
OFFICE

- VIP HOUR - EARLY ENTRY AT 1:00PM
- LIVE COOKING DEMO (VIP HOUR) FROM CHEF LAURA FOWLER-COSS
- PRIVATE SEATING AREA
- RESTROOMS
- 2 "FULL POUR" DRINK TICKETS
- HORS D'OEUVRES



LIVE
ENTERTAINMENT
&
FOOD VENDORS



For more information, please call the Chamber office (386)752-3690

