



Six-year-old Jillian Tyler (from left) of Cherry Hill, Lexie Meitzler, 8, of West Deptford and her father, Jeff Meitzler, pick blueberries yesterday during the 25th annual Whitesbog Blueberry Festival in Whitesbog Village, Pemberton Township.

The blueberry has its day

Whitesbog festival celebrates state fruit, history

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6-29-08 "It's a beautiful time of year
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vice president of Whitesbog
Preservation Trust

PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP — Thousands of people braved the heat yesterday to visit historic Whitesbog Village for the annual celebration of the blueberry, New Jersey's official state fruit.

The 25th annual Whitesbog Blueberry Festival was held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the village off County Route 530.

Visitors were treated to live music, arts and crafts, food and children's activities.

Tours of the village's agricultur-

al museum and a cottage that depicts what life was like for Whitesbog workers in the 1920s also proved to be popular attractions during the day-long event.

Of course, the festival wouldn't have been complete without the blueberries themselves. Whitesbog Village, in the heart of the Pinelands National Reserve, is the birthplace of the cultivated blue-

berry.

Throughout the day, visitors were able to ride a hay wagon into the blueberry fields and pick the fruit to take home.

Proceeds from the festival benefit the Whitesbog Preservation Trust, which works to restore and protect the village and the land that surrounds it.

John Joyce, vice president of the trust, said the festival seems to grow in popularity every year.

"It's a beautiful time of year in the Pinelands," Joyce said. "The big draw is that people know that it's a good bargain and there are a lot



BCT staff photos/MATT STANLEY
A fiddler for more than 70 years
Jody Dennison of Mount Laurel played with the Piney Hollow Drifters during yesterday's festival.

See **BLUEBERRY A3**

Whitesbog fest draws blueberry fans, history buffs to county

BLUEBERRY From A1

of things to see. You can get into a lot of the village houses, and it's a way for people to get in touch with the historical roots of the area."

The trust leases Whitesbog from the state of New Jersey. In addition to working to preserve it, the trust provides educational programs about its history and culture.

Several walking tours, lectures and video and slide presentations also were featured at the festival.

The festival attracted people from throughout New Jersey as well as those from neighboring Pennsylvania



BCT staff photo/MATT STANLEY

Six-year-old Anna Cannizzaro of Lanoka Harbor and her father, Jim, take a wagon ride to pick blueberries yesterday during the 25th annual Whitesbog Blueberry Festival in Whitesbog Village, Pemberton Township.

and New York.

Vic and Barbara Miles of Cherry Hill said they enjoyed the festival despite the hot weather.

"Everything was very informative and interesting. It was a lot of fun," Barbara

Miles said.

George Conradi said he came to the festival from Fanwood in Union County.

"It's unique for New Jersey. You don't find this type of environment anywhere else in the state," he said.

County has a rich historical heritage

HERITAGE From 3



DISCOVER BURLINGTON
BURLINGTON COUNTY TIMES

One of the first Indian reservations in North America was established in Burlington County. Napoleon Bonaparte's brother immigrated to America and set up housekeeping in Bordentown City.

The mud used to break in new baseballs before they're used in major-league play is dredged up from a local site that's one of baseball's most closely guarded secrets.

Along the Rancocas Creek, historians have identified numerous houses used as hiding places for runaway slaves on the Underground Railroad during the Civil War era. It all goes back to the anti-slavery activism of Woolman that was kept alive by Quaker meetings that dot the county to this day.

Fort Dix, the U.S. Army post established in 1917, has trained millions of Army recruits from every walk of life during its long history.

It was also one of the first U.S. military installations desegregated in the late 1940s, when part of it was partitioned as McGuire Air Force Base.

Today the two installations are in the process of joining together with the adjacent Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station in Ocean County to form the military's first megabase, uniting Army, Air Force and Naval units.

Ethnic enclaves of Italians, Poles, Romanians and Hungarians still thrive in the former industrial towns of Riverside and Florence, where relatives labored in generations past. They have been joined by a new wave of immigrants from South and Central America as well as Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia.

Willingboro, a onetime farm town, was transformed into a suburb by housing pioneer William Levitt and, in ensuing years, was held up nationally as the model of an integrated community.

Sleek new passenger trains now travel through the river towns of Burlington County from Trenton to Camden. The train system, called the River Line, offers inexpensive rides as well as hope for the economic rebirth of downtown shopping districts and abandoned industrial sites.

The county has undergone enormous change during its past quarter-century of growth and commerce, but the huge expanses of pine forests will likely stand forever.

About a third of the county south of Route 70 is part of the 1.1-million-acre Pinelands National Preserve, a federally protected region that en-



John Joyce, Vice President of Whitesbog Trust, delivers boxes of fresh blueberries from local grower, Walt Adams, of Pemberton Township to the Whitesbog Blueberry festival.

BCT staff photo/NANCY ROKOS

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About a third of the county south of Route 70 is part of the 1.1-million-acre Pinelands National Preserve, a federally protected region that encompasses not only unique plant and wildlife species but also the core of the blueberry and cranberry industries that were nurtured and expanded in the county.

These and other varieties of the county's agricultural heritage are celebrated each July during the Burlington County Farm Fair, a traditional carnival dating back to 1946 held at the Village Green in Lumberton.

The county's farming heritage also got a big boost last spring with the opening of the new Community Agricultural Center in Moorestown.

The center features a community garden and hosts regular farmer's market days and farm festivals.

COUNTY KEEPS STRONG FARMING TRADITION

Area also contains vibrant retail sector and manufacturing

A major aspect of preserving this significant past is an acknowledgement of the importance of the county's farming industry. Considered a leading agricultural county in the United States, Burlington has more acres devoted to farming than any other county in the state. The largest blueberries in the world were developed and are raised in Burlington County. The cranberry that was found growing wild when the first settlers arrived is a considerable industry, too. Today, Burlington County is the second-largest blueberry producer and third-largest cranberry producer in America.

Burlington County is so proud of its agriculture that the county recently established a farmers' market in Moorestown. Sponsored by the Burlington County freeholders,



BCT staff photo/NANCY ROKOS
During the Whitesbog Blueberry Festival in Pemberton Township, resident Irene Murphy works in Whitesbog General Store.

the farmers' market is open mid-June through the end of October and features locally grown produce.

Much of Burlington County's land is also protected land. The county has a comprehensive land preservation program designed to ensure that 25,000 acres of vital

farmland and 3,480 acres of open space are protected. An amazing three-fifths of the county is located within the National Pinelands Reserve, where development is highly restricted in an effort to maintain the Pinelands' integrity and unique environmental significance.

And yet, leadership continues to move the county forward, with the land as the nucleus of its success. The banks of the Delaware River have given rise to a significant manufacturing industry, while many areas of the county are ready for new development.

Companies such as Ocean Spray Cranberries Inc., Ball Corp., Viking Yacht Co. and Griffin Pipe Products Co. occupy nearly 4 million square feet of manufacturing space. Meanwhile, Ikea, Burlington Coat Factory, CVS Caremark, Prince Sports Group Inc., Fresenius Medical Care, Bed, Bath & Beyond, Rent-A-Center, Dietz & Watson and Office Depot are using more than 3 million square feet of warehouse and distribution facilities.

The military has a strong presence in Burlington County, thanks to the location of not one, but two military bases — Fort Dix Army Base and McGuire Air Force Base. Both facilities are at the forefront of this nation's military proficiency, while providing vital jobs and

See **AGRICULTURE** on 68

A TIME TO

Rejoice,
Celebrate

WORSHIP
DIRECTORY

County preserves its healthy farm tradition

AGRICULTURE From 67

pumping valuable money into Burlington County's economy. These two bases, along with Lakehurst Naval Air Station, will merge to form one giant "mega base." The \$85 million project will create new jobs for the construction of administration, maintenance and training buildings. Additional new construction projects totaling about \$300 million are expected to result from the creation of the mega base, along with 1,200 new permanent jobs.

There's been growth in the county's retail sector as well. Businesses such as Barnes & Noble, PetSmart, OfficeMax, CompUSA, Dick's Sporting Goods, Home Depot, Target and Kohl's call the county home.

The square footage owned and maintained by major corporations in the county tells the tale of success, too. Organizations such as NFL Films Inc., Computer Sciences Corp., CSX Transportation and PHH Mortgage occupy more than 2.25 million square feet of office space. One major reason that development has seen such an in-

crease in Burlington County is the River Route Revitalization Program. The initiative facilitates the continued revitalization of the River Route corridor, a 17-mile-long area running along the Delaware River from Palmyra to Florence. The freeholders, along with the 12 municipalities along U.S. Route 130 and the Delaware River, developed a comprehensive plan that struck a balance between business and residential growth and development in the communities' combined 57 square miles. The establishment of the light-rail transit service along the corridor has continued to spur the growth.

The employment statistics confirm that observation. In the last 10 years, the county has added 62,000 new jobs and 3,500 new businesses.

With its mixture of preserved and developed land, farms and businesses, Burlington County is balanced and beautiful.

"Burlington County is one of the 100 most livable counties in America, according to Outside magazine, and according to The New York Times, the county is coming alive."



BCT staff photo/DENNIS MCDONALD
A parade of old tractors makes its way down the main road in Whitesbog Village in Pemberton Township during a recent blueberry festival.

Serving Burlington County