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Birds of prey featured at first Mother Earth Day celebration

By Jean Cole

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— A former Athens resident will be bringing some feathered friends to the city's Mother Earth Day Celebration.

The first-time celebration will be from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday, May 8, at Big Springs Memorial Park, located at Market and Beaty streets.

The Do-Da Parade downtown will kick off the Mother Earth Day Celebration, followed by live music, free food, Pepsi, door prizes, crafts for the children, a plant and bake sale, mini-seminars on various topics, vendors with Earth-friendly products and services, and other goodies at the park.

Raptor Trek

Four to five birds of prey from the Alabama 4-H Youth Development Center in Auburn will be at the park stage for up to two hours beginning at 1 p.m. doing flight demonstrations, if conditions are right.

The birds are captive bred, rehabilitated or imprinted animals that cannot be released into the wild, said Lynne Hart, executive coordinator of Keep Athens-Limestone Beautiful, which is hosting the event.

"We are very lucky to be able to bring this program to Athens," she said. "A wonderful KALB supporter and volunteer has covered the cost of the Raptor Trek program and we are so grateful."

Former Athens resident Becky Collier, who is program coordinator of environmental



Sequoia the Red-Tailed Hawk held by Allison Pickel, lead staff for the Coosa River Science School, and three or four other birds of prey will visit Athens on Saturday, May 8, for the first Mother Earth Day Celebration at Big Springs Memorial Park. The Raptor Trek demonstration is just one of the events planned for the free celebration. Courtesy photo

education at the center, will be here to present information about native owls, hawks and falcons, Hart said. Alabama conservation and information about these animals will be included in the program, she said.

Viewers will be able to photograph the birds and ask the handler questions. However, for safety reasons, they will not be allowed to touch the birds.

Bring shoes, clothes, food

The point of Mother Earth Day is to celebrate our Earth mother, who sustains us. We should do what we can to make her happy. Bring your gently used clothing and shoes as well as some canned goods to the celebration. The shoes will be collected for Soles for Souls, which gives them to needy people in other countries; the clothing will be collected for the Downtown Rescue Mission in Athens; and the non-perishable food and canned goods will be collected for the Limestone County Churches Involved food pantry.

For more information, go online to www.KeepAthensLimestoneBeautiful.com, send e-mail to KeepALBeautiful@att.net or call (256) 233-8728.

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