



Georgetown County, South Carolina

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Three national fishing tournaments coming to Campbell marina

GEORGETOWN COUNTY — A national catfish tournament coming to Georgetown in April will be the first of three major fishing tournaments the county will play host to over the next 14 months, attracting national attention and hundreds of fishermen and their families from across the country.

Cabela's King Kat Tournament Trail will stop in Georgetown for a two-day super event on April 25 and 26. Anglers will compete for cash prizes up to \$5,000, with a guaranteed payout of \$10,000. Weigh-ins will take place at the county's Carroll Ashmore Campbell Marine Complex on the Sampit River. During the King Kat tournament, the Campbell Marine Complex will also feature a free kids fishing rodeo sponsored by Cabela's, Crappie USA and Georgetown County Parks and Recreation. Signup for that event starts at 8 a.m. April 26, with the rodeo running from 9-11 a.m. Children age 12 and under are eligible to participate and enter to win one of six \$1,000 scholarships.

The Inshore Fishing Association Redfish Tour and Kayak Tour are additionally scheduled for Georgetown this year, from Aug. 15-17. And county officials received word just last month that Georgetown County will be host to the weeklong B.A.S.S. Nation Southern Divisional Championship April 19-25, 2015.

The B.A.S.S. Nation event alone is expected to draw more than 100 fishermen, filling up hotel rooms and other rentals, said Beth Goodale, Georgetown County's director of parks and recreation. Each state sends a team of its top anglers to its respective divisional to attempt to qualify to advance to the B.A.S.S. Nation Championship. It is anticipated that fishermen who enter the B.A.S.S. Nation Southern Divisional will make an average of four pre-tournament fishing visits to the county. A similar tournament that took place in Michigan last year had a local economic impact of about \$2 million, Goodale added.

"We're incredibly excited. We think this is going to bring some major exposure for Georgetown County as a fisherman's paradise," Goodale said.

All three tournaments will feature weigh-ins at the Campbell Marine Complex. The facility was opened by the county in 2010 and was constructed under the county's Capital Improvement Plan with an eye toward attracting well-known national tournaments and aiding the local economy through recreational tourism.

The county's wealth of water resources, in conjunction with the Campbell complex — a 20-

acre facility with six boat launch ramps, outdoor event stage, courtesy docking and parking for 200 vehicles with trailers — were imperative in securing the King Kat, IFA and B.A.S.S. Nation tournaments, Goodale said.

Goodale and her staff, along with County Administrator Sel Hemingway have been working hard over the last couple of years to get national tournaments to take an interest in Georgetown County. The catfish tournament was booked last year when Goodale attended the National Association of Sports Commissions conference in Kentucky. It wasn't initially an easy sell as tournament officials didn't associate Georgetown with the type of fishing their event focuses on, she said. But after a site visit, those same officials not only changed their thinking, but were enthusiastic enough about Georgetown County to express interest in having it host a championship in the future.

Jon Stewart, director of B.A.S.S. Nation, recently said one of the things he likes best about the organization's divisionals is the "opportunity to go places that you don't often think of as well-known tournament destinations." It gives the organization a chance to shine a light on little-known but excellent fishing spots, garnering interest from fishermen across the nation. As host site for the southern divisional, Georgetown County will be featured in an issue of "B.A.S.S. Times" magazine the month prior to the tournament. Folks from around the nation will also be exposed to fishing opportunities available in Georgetown County via www.bassmaster.com, where daily stories and photo galleries will be posted during the tournament, and daily weigh-ins will be streamed live.

"An integral component of the development of the Carroll Ashmore Campbell Marine Complex was to attract nationally-recognized tournaments to our area, and to expose the participants and their guests to our waterways and quality of life, in hopes of their returning for future tournaments or perhaps vacations or even home purchases," Hemingway said. "The immediate economic benefits of these tournaments will certainly make a large impact on our communities, but our goal is to develop a longstanding relationship with these organizations and their participants."

Sign up now or get more information about the King Kat tournament at www.kingkatusa.com. For information about kids events taking place during the tournament, call Georgetown County Parks and Recreation, (843) 545-3275.

Look for more details to be released about the King Kat, IFA and B.A.S.S. Nation tournaments in the future.

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