

Angier Bike Fest History

For more than 30 years the town of Angier has had a successful town festival called the Crepe Myrtle Festival. Beginning in July and then moving to the second Saturday in September in hopes of cooler weather, the Crepe Myrtle Festival always drew a large crowd with many arts and crafts vendors and rides for children. Noticing that there wasn't much to draw men and those with interests beyond arts, crafts and children's rides, a local pastor and Angier Chamber of Commerce board member approached the Angier Chamber of Commerce in 2001 about adding an antique car show to the Crepe Myrtle Festival. After serious and thoughtful consideration, the Angier Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors concluded that there wasn't sufficient space available in town to do both at the same time. The following year the Angier Chamber of Commerce was approached about adding a Motorcycle show to the Crepe Myrtle Festival venue since a number of bikes could easily fit in a relatively small space. After thoughtful consideration the Angier Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors approved a Bike Show component to be added to the Crepe Myrtle Festival.

2002 was the first Crepe Myrtle Motorcycle show. Two board members labored hard and created from scratch an event that would very shortly stand on its own. The 2002 bike show over came many obstacles from a lack of experience to pouring rain on the day of the event. Special credit should be given to Ms. Millie Locklear, then of Olde Mill Motors, who drafted the rules and framework for the first ever Angier Bike fest. The event was a success with 12 bikes pre-registered and appearing in the rain. All proceeds from the event went to support the Angier Library which had been severely damaged from a strong Thunderstorm and a very leaky roof.

From the interest and the amount of bikes and motorcyclists who turned out even in the rain, it was immediately clear that this could be much more than an appendage to an otherwise successful event. If ride up registrations had been accepted the first year the event would have been 2 to 3 times larger! Millie took the event to the next step as she headed a small sub-committee that explored a stand alone event. 2003 became the stepping stone to just such an event.

The 2003 Crepe Myrtle Motorcycle Show took place on the same day as the Crepe Myrtle festival but at a location a few blocks from the main events of the Crepe Myrtle Festival. There were separate vendors specific to motorcycles, a separate stage and entertainment at the bike show that was held in the parking lot of the recently defunct Sun Mart Foods. With ample space the event attracted many who would not have otherwise stopped for the Crepe Myrtle Festival and it became clear that the 2 events could compete with one another if held on the same day. There were about 50 bikes in the show on a bright and sunny day.

2004 marked a great leap forward for the Crepe Myrtle Motorcycle Show as it moved to the first Saturday in June as a stand alone event. Nearly 80 motorcycles were in the show and more than 1,000 bikers stopped for the event that included vendors and a poker run to benefit Blazin Wheels, a charity that supports the families of fallen fire

fighters. Special thanks go to Chris Hedges who had been active in other bike events and who single handedly created and managed the poker run with over 100 bikes and riders participating. The courageous coordinators of the event in 2004 were Gary Denning and Timmy Weis who gave much of their time and energy to create the first ever stand alone bike fest.

In 2005 we were acutely aware of standing on the shoulders of those who have come before us. Building on the energy, enthusiasm and hard work of many volunteers and a few courageous leaders like Millie, Gary, Timmy and Chris, the 2005 Bike fest committee was ready to break new ground. For the first time the event became known as the Angier Bike Fest and we had the support of our own bike shop owned by Steve Dupree (D&Q Chopper Shop). The Angier Bike Fest was evolving and becoming more successful. A small and dedicated committee began work in earnest in late February 2005. Members included local artist Larry "Flash" Wilkinson and his wife Lynn, Campbell University pharmacy student and photographer David McLean, bike shop owner Steve Dupree who hosted all meetings in the back of D&Q Chopper Shop, Chamber of Commerce director Sheila Cratch, firefighters Chris Hedges and Jeff Goodwin, Johnny Dickens who designs sprinkler systems, CB Banks who is a local brick mason and biker, police officer Anthony Joyner, Gary and Patty Denning who own and operate a golf cart shop in town and two local pastors: Rev. Pat Chisenhall of Abundant Life Worship Center and Rev. Tom Newman of Angier United Methodist Church who also served as the reluctant chair of the event. In 2005 we grew the bike show to 118 bikes in the show and an estimated crowd of 4,000 to 5,000 people and bikers who attended some or all of the day's events.

In planning for the 2005 Angier Bike Fest several things became apparent. We knew soon after we started planning that we should have started earlier and that there was potential for the event to grow exponentially. We kept a keen eye for things that we could do better in 2006 and we began meeting much earlier. We had our first ever event wrap up meeting before the end of June and our first 2006 planning meeting on Tuesday August 2, 2005 at 6:45 PM at D&Q Chopper Shop. Already this year our planning committee has grown to include the Post Master Rhonda Abernethy, Philip Allen a car salesman from Heister Chevrolet, independent insurance agent and biker Brooks Johnson, and former town manager Tom Taylor. We are exploring ways to make the event more than just a single day. We also hope to include bike games and stunt riding teams. We expect more sponsors, more vendors, much more advertising and a much, much greater attendance. It is our prayer that the reality of the 2006 Angier Bike Fest will completely dwarf our wildest expectation. Your support is greatly needed as we invite you to work with us to create an awesome, memorable, entertaining and family friendly bike event in East Central North Carolina. To offer support, suggestions or to begin a dialogue please contact us at webmaster@angierbikefest.org or call the chamber at 919-639-2500.