



# Hog Wild In Fayetteville

By Jim Fairbanks

## Bikes, Blues, And BBQ Rule

**F**all is almost here and that means the Hogs will be in Fayetteville again. No, I'm not talking about the Arkansas Razorbacks this time. I'm talking about Harley Davidson motorcycles. The seventh annual Bikes, Blues, and Barbeque motorcycle rally is October 3-6 this year.

Since its beginning in 2000, BBBBQ has already grown to become one of the five largest bike rallies in America—and the largest non-profit rally. Last year, the event—the fastest growing motorcycle rally in the world—drew an estimated 275,000 visitors over the four days it was held. That's more than four times the number of people who call Fayetteville home! The sound of motorcycle engines mingles with the sight of colorful falling maple leaves.

Dickson Street, arguably the best entertainment district in Arkansas, is not only colorful but crowded. Bars, shops, and eateries line both sides of the thoroughfare, which connects the University of Arkansas campus to downtown Fayetteville. Here, you can

find the core of the rally, with hundreds of cycles parked along streets and in parking lots, or cruising along the street—all of them cleaned and polished to perfection.

This isn't a rowdy, drunken Mardi Gras at its worst type of crowd, though. Many of the cycle enthusiasts who attend BBBBQ are middle-aged—and older—professionals with the disposable income to spend on what can be an expensive hobby. Yes, there are plenty of people drinking and having a good time, but for the most part, they're a well-mannered group. To put things into perspective, last year, the Fayetteville Police Department reported fewer arrests than after a typical Razorbacks home football game. Plans are made with security in mind. The "Chairman of the Board" for the event is retired FPD chief of police Richard Watson.

It's a family-friendly rally. If you're picturing the wild partying of Sturgis or Daytona, think again. "Vendors are not allowed to carry any products that are lewd," said Greg Mack of Taylor Mack Advertising in Fayetteville. "If they display items that are, they are asked to leave. This makes our event unique among bike rallies." There's still plenty to see—and buy—from jewelry to leather jackets to motorcycle accessories.



All kinds of bikes, all kinds of bikers attend the big event at Fayetteville, "home of the hogs." (photo: Ken Rathburn)



*There are stunt and trick rider demonstrations for the gawkers and the many "sane and sensible" bikers who attend. (photo: Greg Hall)*

Bikes, Blues, and Barbeque features local and regional bands, which includes some that play classic rock. "We haven't booked any big names, because we want to keep our costs low enough to keep this a free event. The bands don't make a lot of money, but they get good exposure. Some bands got out of state gigs last year due to their performance at Bikes, Blues and Barbeque," added Mack.

Last year, the Tyson Indoor Track Center was added to the growing list of entertainment venues. The building is climate controlled, which can be important in the event of rain. Shuttles will run between the track center and the stage area on Dickson Street. "The day vendors will be moved to the track center, where there is more space for larger exhibits," said Mack. "This year we expect to add aerial acrobatics to the motorcycle stunt shows held there." A swap meet will be set up inside the building as well, for anyone who has motorcycle-related merchandise to sell.

The parade route, which can stretch up to ten miles, has been changed this year to decrease street congestion and concentrate the spectators.

You need to bring your appetite along for this ride. Each year, the barbeque cook-off draws more teams competing for a grand prize of \$3,500 and the Arkansas State BBQ Championship.

The music and food aren't the only attractions to this event. For many, the scenic Ozark Mountain

roadways are a great place to get out and do some pleasure riding. The leaves are just starting to change color. Ride routes will be printed for distribution at BBBBQ and can be found at the website.

On the subject of scenery, but of a different type, the Bikes, Blues and Barbeque Babes contest had over 100 lovely contestants last year. The 2007 contest preliminaries will be held over a series of weekends at various local venues.

If you're not sold on BBBBQ yet, the free Harley might get your motor running. There will be a drawing on Saturday for a Harley Davidson Classic Road King provided by Cycle Connection of Joplin, Mo. Proceeds from ticket sales go to the Fayetteville Boys and Girls Club.

Then there's one of my favorite pastimes—people-watching. Fayetteville provides several opportunities to do this, but none quite like Bikes, Blues, and Barbeque. The event draws a mix of college students, tourists, bike enthusiasts, and curious local residents. The backdrop of music, barbeque, and motorcycles with their leather-clad riders gives Dickson Street an atmosphere that can't be found any other time of the year. I'll look for you, but if you want to stand out in the crowd, you've got your work cut out for you! ☺

—Blues fan Jim Fairbanks lives in Fayetteville and writes humor set in the Ozarks.

*Additional information can be found at [bikesbluesandbbq.org](http://bikesbluesandbbq.org). To find out about other area attractions and lodging, call toll free 1-800-766-4626.*



*Bikes and banners abound in the "Parade of Power." (photo: Janet McLaughlin)*